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The Guidance and Influencing of Girls Leaving School at Fourteen. A study in the content, methods and contradictions in this process based on the girls' departments of the London County Council maintained elementary schools 1904-1924.

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Abstract

This examination of the pressures and influences on London elementary schoolgirls is set in a period when local authority and state pressures for conformity over attendance and health regulations were placing increasing burdens on homes and families. Simultaneously emphasis on the training of daughters in domesticity and infant care, under professional guidance at school, was becoming a powerful obligation on educators. This obligation was expected to reach far beyond mere technical training, contributing to a structure of moral control with supervision extending beyond school into early years of employment. The newly established London County Council Education Authority, both in size and in the variety of elementary schools, offers rich material on the operation of this process of attempted control and of conflicts engendered within it.

Attempts to establish a coherent and consistent moral structure for elementary schoolgirls presented acute difficulties which are considered in this thesis. Thus pressure for the teaching of domestic subjects met counter demands that general education for girls should have priority, with any narrowing of their horizons towards domesticity being resisted. Infant care tuition, launched with strong government backing, alarmed some educationists lest by stimulating girls' curiosity it might weaken the taboo on sex education. Simultaneously however, others sought to extend instruction in sex matters for the protection of young girls, or to advance eugenist beliefs. The fast-growing cinema, seen as a morally dubious form of mass entertainment, had also to be scrutinised and controlled. During the war years a degree of resistance, emanating from teachers, to the brutality of current propaganda marked a victory for the ideals of duty and service inculcated particularly for girls. By contrast attempts by teachers and administrators to extend moral control after schooldays largely failed, undermined by suspicion and impatience from home and from former pupils, by demands of employers and by post-war economies in education.

I Introduction

i A survey of secondary and primary sources

This thesis concerns early twentieth century opinion and practice as to the proper training of elementary schoolgirls. It is placed at the outset in the context of relations between school and home, based on London experience. Consideration then moves to the specific tuition attempted in London maintained elementary schools for the purpose of rendering girls more effective agents of good domestic practice in their own homes, and to prepare them for future wifely duties and for motherhood. The unifying factor in this training lay in the strong sense of moral purpose presumed to underlie it. While the immediate practical usefulness of domestic and infant care instruction for girls was admitted, both were cast, particularly the latter, in terms of character building and moral tuition. Attempts at the difficult task of direct moral teaching are then discussed, entering the strongly debated area of whether girls' moral purity would be better defended by the innocence of ignorance, or by provision of elementary sex instruction.[1] The impact on girls of patriotic and imperial propaganda before and during the war years is of direct relevance to the consideration of this moral dimension. Patriotism was linked to war service undertaken through the schools and also to the duty of future motherhood, reaching a climax with school involvement in National Baby Week in July 1917.[2] Lastly the fact that a school leaving age at the fourteenth birthday decanted virtual children into the labour market led to elaborate attempts, professional, official and voluntary, to overcome the probable moral evils of blind-alley employment, and to provide some form of moral guidance for girls in their early years at work.

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1 J. S. Watson, The Role of the Purity Movement in the Development of Sex Education for Young People 1850-1914 Unpublished M.Phil thesis (London 1978).

2 See Chapter III ii *infra*.

Of the secondary sources available for this study only a small number are directly concerned with girls still at elementary school. A number of studies have however in the past twenty to thirty years dealt with theories dominant from the 1890s onwards which influenced, often deeply, social, medical and educational policies involving these girls. Under the overall title of The Quest for National Efficiency, Professor G. R. Searle draws attention to the 'horror and profound depression' that attended the disasters of the Boer War, and accelerated the spread of existing eugenist and social-Darwinist theories designed to combat what was seen as individual and racial degeneration and to promote national efficiency at a variety of different levels.[3] Searle develops the earlier analysis of Professor B. Semmel, whose study explores the connection between eugenics and social-Darwinism in the field of social reform as well as of military and naval changes. Semmel considers the involvement in social reform of some leading imperialists, notably Lord Milner, to be a matter of significance when considering the weight and intensity of concern over health and behaviour directed at working-class families, and the nature of patriotic and imperial propaganda directed at schools.[4] Milner's involvement has been discussed in more depth by J. O. Stubbs,[5] and other recent studies have further analysed the complexities of approach and of conflicts among politicians, educationists, medical spokesmen and social theorists including the Fabians, before, during and after the First World War. Dr R. A. Lowe extends the survey of the educational implications of eugenist theory, drawing particular attention to the extent to which educational institutions and the press became imbued with eugenic ideas and principles; to the eugenic influence in politics for control of mental defectives, a major victory for their lobby before the war; and to the manner in which after the war, in spite of previous opposition and even hostility, the Board of Education took up eugenic views on testing in

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3 G. R. Searle, The Quest for National Efficiency (Oxford 1971).

4 B. Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform, English Social-Imperial Thought 1895-1914 (London 1960).

5 J. O. Stubbs, 'Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour' English Historical Review No.345, October 1982, 717-728.

particular.[6] Searle contributed in 1981 to the symposium Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940,[7] delving into the controversies aroused by eugenics and in particular the extent to which those involved in public health work, health care in schools and other forms of social work could be hostile to the extreme form of eugenic theory which held such ameliorative work to be dysgenic. Dr Charles Webster, in his introductory essay to the symposium analyses the opposition from some sections of medical and lay opinion. Both he and Semmel draw attention to the hostility towards early twentieth century feminism implicit and frequently explicit in eugenic insistence on the primacy of motherhood, controlled and directed in the interests of the race.

The influence of eugenist and social-Darwinist propaganda and policies on women and girls has been considered by feminist historians from the mid-1970s onwards. Among their studies there is some measure of direct concern with girls at elementary schools. Girls in secondary and higher education were the object of assertions, emanating largely from medical sources, that over-education exerted a dysgenic influence on future mothers both physiologically and emotionally. Carol Dyhouse in articles and in her subsequent book[8] reviews this attack and the related campaign to introduce and extend domestic subjects into the curriculum, as part of her wider critique of the traditional view of late nineteenth century changes in girls' education. She challenges the view that such changes represented a major advance in women's emancipation. The controversy at secondary and higher level over the claims of domestic 'science' to be considered as a substitute for standard science is further explored by Catherine Manthorpe[9] but for the purposes of this thesis Dyhouse's

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6 R. A. Lowe, 'Eugenicists, doctors and the quest for National Efficiency : an educational crusade 1900-1939' History of Education Vol.8, No.4, December 1979, 293-306.

7 G. R. Searle, 'Eugenics and Class' in C. Webster (ed.), Biology, Medicine and Society (Cambridge 1981) 217-237.

8 C. Dyhouse, Girls growing up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (London 1981) and see also her 'Social Darwinistic ideas and the Development of Women's Education' History of Education Vol.5 (1) 1976.

9 C. Manthorpe, 'Science or Domestic Science : the struggle to define an appropriate Science Education for Girls in early Twentieth Century England' History of Education Vol.15, No.3, 1986, 195-213.

material on the education and socialisation of working-class girls is an important starting point. She considers the process by which the study of domestic crafts and of infant care was developed in the elementary school with the purpose, which Dyhouse sees as seldom achieved, of giving both relevant immediate training and long-term conditioning.

Both Dyhouse[10] and Anna Davin[11] have worked on the closely related field of policies towards working-class mothers. Prevailing rates of infant mortality aroused extreme anxiety from government downwards and in Dyhouse's study of the variety of voluntary and semi-official measures taken to combat this, she surveys contemporary controversies over the causes of high mortality rates, as to whether in particular incorrect and infected feeding, the employment of mothers outside the home, or the effect of external sanitary conditions should be given primacy. Davin considers in more detail the influence of eugenic theories, and while ranging widely over attitudes to maternity, incorporates valuable material on working-class family life and the relationship of mothers to the various agencies setting out to admonish, to instruct, and in some cases to provide genuine and sympathetic support.[12] Dr A. Turnbull examines the development of specialist instruction in household work throughout the educational system, and the relationship of this to the contemporary women's movement.[13] She criticises Dyhouse and Davin for neglect of the factor of gender in the promotion of domestic studies, and explores the paradox that the development of this instruction at all levels was above all the achievement of women - of women moreover who had achieved professional status and a degree of personal independence strikingly at variance with the domestic ideology they were seeking to fasten on schoolgirls.

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10 C. Dyhouse, 'Working-class Mothers' Journal of Social History No. 2, Winter 1978, 248-266.

11 A. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood' History Workshop Journal Issue 5, Spring 1978, 9-65.

12 Even so strong an opponent of patronising attitudes as Sylvia Pankhurst wrote 'maternal and infant welfare centres are proving a great boon to numbers of women' Women's Dreadnought No.4, 7 July 1917.

13 A. Turnbull, 'Women, Education and Domesticity : a study of the domestic subjects movement 1870-1914' Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, CNAA, 1983.

Whatever the long-term importance for elementary schoolgirls of cookery, laundry and housework classes, there is a case for assuming that infant welfare studies in school, in spite of some well-publicised examples of good practice, had at best a marginal impact on pupils and through them on child care standards in families.[14] There is no doubt however about the zeal with which this tuition was initiated by the Board of Education in 1910, and several recent studies are relevant to the context in which it was introduced. The manner in which early twentieth century maternity and child welfare policies were formulated, the framework of ideas and values within which they functioned and the forms they took, have increasingly been studied, not in isolation, but in relation to the working-class families for whom they were intended. Policies, both official and voluntary, could well cut athwart established patterns of family survival and the mother's management of a precarious domestic economy. Dr Jane Lewis's study The Politics of Motherhood explores the contrast between the policy makers, predominantly male, and the women for whom policies were formulated and whose views on solutions to problems of infant and maternal mortality and ill-health might be at odds with those of officialdom. They might well include the desire for direct relief of poverty, for supportive rather than intrusive care, and for some degree of access to birth control.[15] Lewis's article in the symposium Labour and Love sums up recent research findings on the social objectives of state policies including those of educationists, and how these were viewed by recipients.[16]

Ellen Ross's studies of working-class mothers, drawing among other sources on oral history collections, form a richly illuminating addition to the understanding of the lives of young London girls and their family

14 See Chapter III ii *infra* for differing views on the efficiency of infant care studies.

15 J. Lewis, The Politics of Motherhood (London 1980).

16 *Idem.*, 'The Working-class Wife and Mother and State Intervention 1870-1918' in Lewis (ed.), Labour and Love : women's experience of home and family 1850-1940 (Oxford 1986) 99-120.

relationships in schooldays and early working life.[17] Her work gives an added perspective to the writings of such contemporary protagonists of working-class wives and mothers as Anna Martin, Margaret Loane and M. L. Eyles. Jerry White's study of Jewish families in Rothschild Buildings in East London, using much oral evidence, is of particular value on the school experiences of immigrant children and even more for the details of work experience of school leavers in the tailoring, millinery and cigarette-making trades.[18] Of other modern studies using oral evidence, Elizabeth Roberts's A Women's Place while of less direct value, being a Lancashire and not a London study, gives valuable corroborative evidence on mother and daughter relationships.[19]

The effect of the First World War on British society has been a widening field of investigation since Professor Arthur Marwick's survey in 1965.[20] Of more detailed work the most recent is Dr J. M. Winter's analysis of the effects of the war on health and family welfare.[21] In Chapter II ii *infra* evidence is noted from the London school medical authorities on the health and cleanliness of school children in wartime. Some of the work done has specifically concerned women, and Gail Braybon's Women Workers in the First World War is of particular relevance dealing as it does almost exclusively with the experience of working-class women and girls. She is primarily concerned with the central questions of government policy and of employer and trade union attitudes over matters of pay, dilution and working conditions, but also gives a useful analysis of the interrelation between these issues and the current emphasis, upheld by doctrines of race survival, on the claims of maternity and domesticity. She discusses

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17 E. Ross, 'Survival Networks : women's neighbourhood sharing in London before World War One' History Workshop Journal Issue 15, Spring 1983, 4-27; and 'Rediscovering London's Working-class Mothers 1870-1918' in Lewis (ed.), *op.cit.*

18 J. White, Rothschild Buildings : life in an East End tenement block 1887-1920 (London 1980).

19 E. Roberts, A Woman's Place: an oral history of working-class women 1890-1940 (Oxford 1984).

20 A. Marwick, The Deluge (London 1965) and 'Impact of the First World War on British Society' Journal of Contemporary History Vol.3, No.1, January 1968, 51-63; and Women at War 1914-1918 (London 1977).

21 J. M. Winter, The Great War and the British People (London 1986).

the ruthlessness with which emotive propaganda of this kind, backed by government action, was deployed as the war ended to remove women from better paid and more skilled work, and also indicates the conflicts and variations of approach, particularly over married women's work, among Labour women and other feminist leaders.[22] The section by Braybon in her and Dr P. Summerfield's book draws on oral evidence to illustrate the pride and satisfaction felt by many women with their wartime skill and achievements, and their reluctance to return to low-paid traditional work, especially that of domestic service.[23]

The growth of interest in educational reform that marked the later years of the war is considered in Dr G. Sherington's English Education, Social Change and War. His analysis of the Education Act's origins in the pre-war plans of Selby-Bigge and others and of the various concerns, such as that over wartime child labour which contributed to the debate, provides a useful guide to the emergence and rapid overthrow of hopes for compulsory day continuation classes.[24] Much hope for girls had been invested in these classes as a means of ensuring that over-early concentration on domestic and infant care studies should not too greatly interfere with the need for a good general education. So far there is no adequate modern study of the relation of girls in this period to part-time day or evening education. The articles by B. Doherty and Dr D. Thoms on the compulsory day continuation experiment are concerned with the politics of its rise and fall[25] while that of H. Hendrick deals solely with boys.[26] The leisure activities of young working-class girls is another neglected area of study. Dr John Springhall, writing of adolescence in

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22 G. Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War (London 1981). Unemployment benefit, extended in 1920, was frequently witheld from women not wishing to enter domestic service.

23 G. Braybon and P. Summerfield, Out of the Cage : women's experiences in two world wars (London 1987).

24 G. Sherington, English Education, Social Change and War (Manchester 1981).

25 B. Doherty, 'Compulsory Day Continuation : the 1918 experiment' The Vocational Aspect Spring 1966, Vol.18, No.39, 41-56.
D. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation Experiment' History of Education Vol.4, No.1, Spring 1975, 36-50.

26 H. Hendrick, 'A Race of Intelligent Unskilled Labourers : the adolescent workers and the debate on compulsory part-time day continuation schools 1900-1922' History of Education Vol.9, No.2, Spring 1980, 157-173.

Britain between 1860 and 1960 comments on

> the near absence of detailed studies of teenage girls' leisure both in the present and in the past. Their absence from street corners and clubs where boys congregate and their under-representation in the criminal statistics are not excuses for continuing to ignore adolescent girls, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much female leisure has been concealed simply either because it took place in the privacy of home or only when accompanied by the opposite sex.[27]

Since the 1970s a number of studies have appeared concerned with curriculum differentiation between boys and girls and some attention has been focused on the place and significance of domestic subjects teaching in school up to the present day.[28] This is a matter discussed further in Chapter VII at the conclusion of the thesis. Modern work on the elementary school curriculum early in the twentieth century is dominated by Professor R. J. W. Selleck's The New Education, probably the fullest study to date of the welter of theories and developments that followed the demise of the Revised Code.[29] It is surprising that he ignores totally the development of domestic studies for girls apart from a few perfunctory references to needlework. They do not even rate a mention in his survey of the growth of handwork classes for boys and of the moral and intellectual training for which these were to be a vehicle. In default of evidence to the contrary it can only be assumed that Selleck did not consider the qualities and attitudes which it was hoped to develop in girls through domestic training of sufficient importance to merit attention. This is a curious conclusion in the light of the intense earnestness with which some early twentieth century enthusiasts regarded them. The study by Professor Gordon and Professor Lawton of the development of the curriculum has useful material on the growth of domestic subjects,[30] while

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27 J. Springhall, Coming of Age : adolescence in Britain 1860-1960 (London 1986) 120.

28 See for example E. Byrne, Women and Education (London 1978) 54-61; P. Marks, 'Femininity in the Classroom' in J. Mitchell and A. Oakley (eds), The Rights and Wrongs of Women (London 1976) 176-189; M. B. Sutherland, Sex Bias in Education (Oxford 1981).

29 R. J. W. Selleck, The New Education 1870-1914 (London and Melbourne 1968).

30 P. Gordon and D. Lawton, Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London 1978) 106-115.

attention has already been drawn in this chapter to the studies by Dyhouse and Turnbull on their significance in relation to eugenist and social-Darwinist pressures in education.[31]

If the division between primary and secondary sources for the purpose of this thesis be set at about 1930, mention should here be made of Helen Silletoe's standard history of the development of domestic studies' teaching. As teacher, inspector and lifelong enthusiast for her subject she had no doubts about its use and importance. It is however instructive to notice the terms in which the eminent physiologist Professor Winifred Cullis wrote in her Foreword.[32] Her reference to 'a good little cook or laundry maid' suggests that she was writing with the elementary schoolgirl in mind. She pointed out that the movement for domestic studies would never have gained such support had it been seen primarily as vocational training and continued

> Such opposition as it has encountered and as it encounters today is largely based on an understandable fear that stressing this vocational side of a girl's education may rob her of educational opportunities that will help to develop her capacities as fully as possible in the few years which all too often are all she will be able to have at school. Should these subjects be introduced to such an extent as to develop a girl into a good little cook or laundry maid without helping an all-round development of her intellectual and reasoning capacities it would justify these fears. It is good to have the defenders of the girl's birthright of a good general education on guard.[33]

The word 'vocational' is ambiguous here. Professor Cullis might have been referring to preparation for domestic service, or to a future vocation as wife and mother. The latter was indeed the more usual manner in which

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31 C. Dyhouse and A. Turnbull, *ops.cit.* and see Turnbull, 'Learning her Womanly Work : the elementary school curriculum, 1870-1914' in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life (Oxford 1987) 83-100.

32 H. Silletoe, A History of the Teaching of Domestic Subjects (London 1933). Foreword by Professor Winifred Cullis CBE. Professor Cullis (1875-1956) held the Jex-Blake Chair of Physiology at London University 1926-1941. She is described in The Dictionary of National Biography as 'never a militant feminist, but sought the emancipation of both sexes'.

33 Cullis in 'Foreword' to Silletoe, *ibid.*

domestic subjects' teaching was perceived by educationists. Her reference to a girl's right to a good general education echoes statements made during and after the war by some elementary school headmistresses.[34] It contrasts sharply with the attitude taken fifteen years later in 1948 by J. (later Sir John) Newsom. In his view the problem of devising a proper education for girls was one 'of educational principle based on an understanding of the particular emotional, mental and physical interest of girls which will express itself finally in the business of running a home and rearing children'.[35]

Reference has been made earlier in this section to the emphasis on moral education as a permeating force in the school experience of girls. Selleck deals in some detail with controversies over the teaching of morals in elementary schools, though without specific reference to girls,[36] and the subject is dealt with more briefly but with valuable illustrative material in Gordon and Lawton's survey of curriculum change.[37] Moral education campaigns[38] had strong links with the late nineteenth century Purity movement, and the relationship between this and early attempts to provide some form of sex education for young people is examined for the years between 1850 and 1914 in J. S. Watson's thesis. Her study includes a useful survey of the Purity movement's literature directed at middle-class young people of both sexes and of its influence on tentative approaches towards sex education for working-class girls in particular.[39] The moral welfare of young girls after leaving school was the specific concern of the Girls' Friendly Society founded in 1874. Although the Society was strongest outside the large towns, in which there was less scope for its combination of upper-class 'associate' and working-class 'member', Dr Brian Harrison in his study of its origins and workings refers to several

34 See Chapter III I *infra.*

35 J. Newsom, The Education of Girls (London 1948) 109.

36 Selleck, *op. cit.*, 299-328.

37 Gordon and Lawton, *op. cit.*, 98-106.

38 See Chapter IV *infra.*

39 J. S. Watson, *op. cit.*

branches in East London for factory girls.[40] Certainly the protection of country girls coming to larger towns as domestic servants was one of the Society's major concerns.[41] Dr Harrison points out the highly practical manner in which help was offered to girls 'to make virtue feasible' for them through 'a network of aids and benefits'. These included 'prizes for thrift, convalescent homes, country holidays, personal advice, lodging houses, protection for travellers, training schemes, recreational facilities and employment registries' - forms of help not to be underestimated, as Dr Harrison points out, 'when the state's welfare role was minimal'.

The relationship between feminism and the Purity movement in the early twentieth century has been the subject of a number of recent studies investigating a hitherto relatively neglected aspect of the women's movement at that time. The protection of girls and young women from incest, criminal assault, venereal disease and cruelly biased treatment in the law courts were matters raised frequently and bitterly in the feminist press, and recent publications include Sheila Jeffreys's The Spinster and her Enemies,[42] the Sexuality Debates volume in the Women's Source Library series[43] and Frank Mort's Dangerous Sexualities.[44] Mort surveys, over a longer period from 1830 to the present, certain major trends in the relationship between medicine, the law, and attitudes towards sex and morals, examining the attempts by some feminists to break through to a more open, less repressive approach to sexual knowledge. The relation of these debates to moral and hygienic education of elementary school girls and to the promotion of information to teachers and parents is discussed in Chapter IV *infra*.

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40 B. Harrison, 'For Church, Queen and Family: The Girls' Friendly Society 1874-1920' Past and Present No.61, November 1973, 106-138.

41 Protection of young girls in service was also undertaken in London by the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants (MABYS) founded in 1875. Its work, which was principally with girls from Poor Law institutions, is discussed in Chapter VI *infra*.

42 S. Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930 (London 1985).

43 *Idem.* (ed.), The Sexuality Debates Women's Source Library Series (New York and London 1987).

44 F. Mort, Dangerous Sexualities: Medico-Moral Politics in England since 1830 (London 1987).

Girls in the elementary schools have attracted less attention from modern writers than boys, or than girls in secondary education. Much of the material discussed in this section has therefore been important as background rather than directly related to their concerns. The study of primary sources in this field is far more rewarding both nationally and in relation to London education.

The London County Council Education Officer's files form the basis of primary source material on girls in the Authority's elementary schools together with some files relevant to the schools from the Health Authority. School log books are another essential source, both those of the older pre-1913 format and the later type. Minutes of the London County Council Education Committee and material from the official reports of the Schools Medical Officer for London also yield valuable evidence on the schools, while a number of Board of Education files on individual schools are also available.

The Education Officer files, while essential, are, for the years 1904 to the early 1920s, a haphazardly arranged collection of very uneven evidential value and with frequent lacunae especially during the war years. The best documented area concerns school welfare work and the structuring and function of care committees. The tensions between voluntary and paid care committee workers, the difficulties arising from the work when both the Education and the Health Committees of the Council were involved[45] and the virtual breakdown of some voluntary committees during the war[46] emerge in correspondence and in memoranda to the Chief Education Officer. This is an area where boys' and girls' concerns are often undifferentiated, as for example in the long and valuable memorandum

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45 Greater London Records Office (hereafter GLRO) EO/WEL/1/28. Comment added to a report from Miss Morton, senior care committee officer to the London County Council (hereafter LCC) Education Authority. 'The Care Committee organisation includes workers of many different aims and views and holding different theories of the state ... The trend, it seems to me, is different in the two departments : educational Care Committee work aims at the self-dependence of the family; medical Care Committee work drifts towards state dependence. An unbridgeable gulf.'

46 GLRO EO/WEL/6/15 Letter from Miss Morton to Sir Robert Blair, 6 October 1914.

from Sir Robert Blair on the functioning and weaknesses of the after-school advice and supervision structure in which care committees were much involved.[47] Useful confirmation of difficulties over welfare provision comes from articles in the Charity Organisation Review reflecting the strong Charity Organisation Society (COS) presence in the care committee service, though the frank and sympathetic tone of some writers reflects the variety to be found among their workers and the need to avoid stereotyped judgements.[48] Other important documents in this collection of files relate more specifically to girls. They include the 1914 Report of the Education Committee on the teaching of sex hygiene in schools;[49] the Memorandum from the Board of Education on the teaching of Infant Care in elementary schools and the report of a conference on this work held in January 1914.[50] A series of reports on Science teaching in London elementary schools from 1909, 1914-1915 and 1919 provides useful material, both on the generally low level of the work and on the different approaches to science for boy and girl pupils.[51]

Some information on individual schools can be found in the surviving log books. For girls' departments 153 are available in the new format introduced in 1913, and 99 in the older style.[52] For a total of 460 girls' departments this is a sad shortfall, though fortunately those extant are fairly evenly divided among the London Authority's nine divisions, and thus cover schools from strongly contrasting social areas. The older books,

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47 GLRO EO/WEL/1/28 Report of an inquiry into the working of the scheme of co-operation between the LCC Education Authority and the Labour department of the Ministry of Labour. Discussed in Chapter VI *infra* .

48 See for example two articles on care committee work by Helen Jevons in the Charity Organisation Review Vol.42, July-December 1917, 21-25 and 96-100.

49 The report on sex hygiene teaching and the evidence from teachers and others on which its conclusions were based is discussed in Chapter IV *infra*.

50 GLRO EO/GEN/2/16 and see Chapter III ii *infra*.

51 GLRO EO/PS/2/21 The final Report of 1919 came from R. S. Clay, Principal of the Sir John Cass Technical Institute and C. A. Keane, Principal of the Northern Polytechnic. Courses for boys and girls were criticised as frequently unsatisfactory because over-ambitious. The relation between domestic subjects' teaching and science is discussed in Chapter III i *infra*.

52 These logs are concerned with pupils from about eight years old upwards. A number of separate books exist for infant departments.

some dating from the 1880s, carry a firm admonition that 'no reflections or opinions of a general character are to be entered in the log books'. They are an undifferentiated record of day by day events, of visitors to the school, of staff absences and illnesses, of visits and expeditions, and of class examinations, side by side with transcripts of inspectors' reports or accounts of confrontations with angry mothers. It is not surprising that the Authority should have seen the need for a more strictly classified form of log book, though that introduced in 1913 would appear, from the sparse entries in some, to have placed a far heavier burden on overworked head teachers. Entries in the 'Miscellaneous' concluding section of the new type of book can convey a strong sense of the optimism or depression within a school, though as a basis for any form of generalisation about the London Education service they have only a limited function as supplementary evidence helping to confirm information from other sources. Nevertheless they add uniquely to an understanding of how particular schools operated and, when both old and new books for the same schools exist, it is interesting to note the extent to which, apart from schools directly involved in air raids or requisition of premises, the war exacerbated existing problems rather than creating them.

There is little to be gained, apart from a number of HMI reports, from the Board of Education files on particular schools[53] as they are largely concerned with administrative and structural matters. The inspectors' reports in these files are most numerous in 1909 and 1910 and almost entirely disappear after 1913. An entry in the Board of Education Annual Report for 1922-1923 on relations between government and local authority inspectorates stated

> A few of the larger authorities do indeed employ a relatively large number of inspectors whose work is more similar to that of the Board's inspectors and in these areas the Board whenever possible employ a proportionally smaller staff mainly for the purpose of conducting general enquiries or inspecting schools by way of example. This is especially the case in London where the Board do

53 This series is filed at the Public Record Office (hereafter PRO) under the reference ED/21.

not now carry out any exhaustive inspection of Elementary Schools.[54]

The attitudes and main concerns of Board and LCC inspectors in relation to girl pupils were very similar and therefore are here considered together. Relatively few reports from LCC inspectors appear during the later war years, following a decision by the London Authority that formal inspection of elementary school departments seriously affected by the war should cease for the duration.[55] This mainly concerned boys' departments affected by staff war service, but not exclusively, and only a scattering of general reports appear in the logs for girls' departments after 1915 as compared with those on particular subjects - chiefly needlework, physical education and singing. Inspectors however continued to visit schools frequently as the logs bear witness. Such general reports as these had two predominant concerns. In the case of teaching they sought a balance between the promotion of careful and conscientious work on the one hand and on the other the need to keep children's spontaneity. 'Spoonfeeding' was discouraged, while good oral work, individual reading and a practical and comprehensible attitude to arithmetic were strongly commended. The achievement of such a balance, particularly in wartime conditions of staff shortages and general strain, placed a heavy burden on the schools. Innovation and experiment, however dear to the inspectors, could not be allowed to conflict with basic standards of competency, and the Education Officer's review of work over the decade 1905-1915 mentioned the dangers of 'over-liberalising' and deplored 'loose and inaccurate work'.[56]

The second common strand that appears rather more often in Board than in LCC reports concerned the schools' degree of success in cultivating traditional feminine virtues and habits. Accuracy and neatness in work must be achieved but 'without too rigid and constraining a discipline'.

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54 Annual Report of the Board of Education for 1922-1923 [Cmd. 1878] 42-43.
55 GLRO EO/GEN/1/57 Inspection Policy. This decision was reversed in 1919.
56 GLRO EO/GEN/5/21 Review of the Education Officer for 1905-1915.

Therefore evidence of the refining influence of head teachers and senior staff was commended as was the promotion of 'courtesy, honourable conduct, gentle and considerate behaviour'. As for the domestic subjects' centres in London, assessment of their work is hampered by the apparent absence of any reports from the women inspectors who visited them.[57]

Two other official sources require some comment. The Minutes of the LCC Education Committee are predominantly concerned with administration. Occasionally however, apart from the later war years in which they were drastically shortened, the affairs of the pupils come to the surface. Up to 1910 a number of brief case histories for instance were given of children, mainly girls, applying to leave school before their fourteenth birthday because of difficult home circumstances - a concession seldom granted by the London Authority. It is from this same source that there comes the remarkable report of 1922 from the Principals of the short-lived Day Continuation schools, putting their strong case for retention at a time when a variety of largely non-educational pressures had decided against them.[58]

The reports of the Schools Medical Officer for London contain important material on the excessive burden of domestic work carried by girls from as young as eight years old in poor districts of London and the lowered standards of health that resulted from this. Some of the London material was quoted by the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education in his Annual Reports which are also a source for the development of infant care classes in school following the Board's Memorandum of 1910.[59]

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57 Work in the domestic subjects centres and their relations with the schools is discussed in Chapter III i *infra*. So far, search among London and Association of Teachers of Domestic Subjects records has given no clue that any of these written reports are extant.

58 London County Council Education Committee Minutes of 22 February 1922 156-162. See also L. Brooks, The London Compulsory Day Schools, January 1921-July 1922 MA(Ed.) thesis, University of London, June 1923, and Chapter VI *infra*.

59 Board of Education Circular 758. Memorandum on the Teaching of Infant Care and Management 1910. The Memorandum is discussed in detail in Chapter III ii *infra*.

Some useful comparative material on girls and boys at elementary school is to be found in the surveys made by the Chief Inspector of Schools for the LCC, Dr C. W. Kimmins. He appears to have been a man of wide sympathies and with a deep interest in the children. His two large-scale surveys of pupils' spontaneous opinions on the war and on air raids provide an unusual opportunity to compare levels of understanding and powers of expression of girls and boys aged between eight and thirteen.[60] In a narrower field, dealing only with selected ten to eleven year-olds, further comparative material appears in the Reports of the Chief Examiner on the Junior County Scholarship Examinations during and just after the war. As well as some percipient comments from examiners, examples are given of girl and boy treatment of the same essay subjects.[61]

Much material derived from London sources appears in a variety of journals - educational, professional and specifically child-orientated - as well as in symposia, reports of conferences, official and semi-official reports, all reflecting the exceptional activity in the early years of the century over the problems and treatment of children and young persons. The spectrum of opinions expressed is evidence of the intense controversies of the period : the impact of eugenist propaganda, torn by argument within itself; the emergence of miltant feminism involved in a range of moral and social issues well beyond that of the vote; and current conflicts of policy towards problems of poverty and health. Certain professional groups whose work brought them into contact with working-class girls at school and beyond were becoming increasingly vocal and cohesive. These included medical officers of health, professional social workers, women factory inspectors, radical women teachers and professional teachers of domestic subjects. Five journals in particular call for comment - Education, The Schoolmistress, The Child, Child Study and National Health. Education, representing the views of both the Association

60 C. W. Kimmins, 'The Special Interests of Children in the War at Different Ages' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.3, No.3, 6 December 1915, 145-152; and 'The Interests of London Children of Different Ages in Air-raids' *idem.*, Vol.3, No.4, March 1916, 225-236.

61 Extracts from these examination reports for 1915-1918 are given in Chapter V *infra.*

of Teachers in Technical Institutions and Directors and Secretaries of Education, became also in 1904 the official organ of the Association of Teachers of Domestic Science.[62] It covered any matter of serious educational interest, but with a bias to the technical. Extensive attention was given to major policy documents, to conference reports and to the activities of London and other education authorities. A solid mainstream publication, it maintained a positive non-judgemental editorial policy on such contentious matters as sex education in schools and the effects of the cinema. On the two major initiatives of the time for elementary schoolgirls - domestic subjects and infant care teaching - the journal combined total agreement in principle with trenchant criticism of short-comings. The Schoolmistress an independent journal for all women teachers and, unlike The Schoolmaster, with no union affiliations devoted much of its weekly issues to lesson material. However it also gave regular space to the radical National Federation of Women Teachers, a body still technically within the National Union of Teachers and which did not have its own journal until 1919.[63] While much of the NFWT reporting and discussion was of interest only to teachers, it was from time to time forthright in defending girls against overmuch domestic studies, taking the radical view that this was often concealed training for domestic service. It strongly defended the right of girls to the fullest possible general education and exhorted girls going out to work in wartime not to undercut men's pay.

The two journals Child Study[64] founded in 1906 and The Child in 1910, had much in common in terms of contributors used and issues covered, though of the two the latter was more markedly eugenist in tone and carried more descriptive material on child welfare work in progress. Both occupied the middle ground in controversy and allowed argument within limits. Thus the orthodoxies of domestic studies and infant care classes in

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62 Hereafter ATDS. The Association changed 'Science' to 'Subjects' in 1909.

63 National Federation of Women Teachers (hereafter NFWT). Its separate journal The Woman Teacher first appeared in 1919.

64 Organ of the Child Study Society, founded in 1894 and reconstituted in 1907. The origins of the Society and its main features are described in Selleck, *op. cit.*, 278-286.

school were not questioned, but in The Child a number of contributors from various points of view attacked theories of maternal culpability as a major factor in infant mortality levels, and writers in both journals gave space to opposing attitudes towards sex education for school children. Neither extreme eugenist views of the so-called 'better dead' school, nor those of the disciplinarians of the Duty and Discipline Movement[65] found a place except as targets for criticism. National Health, founded in 1908, was directed towards health visitors, school and district nurses, district visitors, nurses and midwives. Its approach was markedly down-to-earth as would be expected in a journal seeking to appeal to those daily concerned with life and death problems. Although strongly in favour of genuine domestic training and infant care classes for schoolgirls as well as welfare campaigns for mothers, contributors could be scathing about what was actually achieved, and hard-hitting on the brutal facts of slum life, such as mothers struggling to earn a pittance[66] or the doctor fighting with local authorities 'as with the wild beasts of Ephesus to get his ill-nourished charges fed'.[67] The Labour activist, Margaret Bondfield, contributed an article in 1914 on the need for national care for maternity setting out the scheme for this drawn up by the Women's Co-operative Guild. She referred to the philanthropic character of many voluntary infant welfare bodies as a 'serious drawback' which was not removed even when public health officials joined in the work.[68]

The value of this group of journals in assessing current attitudes to social problems lies in the fact that virtually all contributors were active in their own specialisms. Certain names recur throughout : Dr Eric Pritchard,

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65 Founded by the Earl of Meath in 1908. Selleck describes it as 'a blend of imperialism, stoicism and grumpy conservatism' (*op.cit.*, 304). Among its targets were the growth of indiscipline among children of all classes, and of sexual licence and excessive drinking among working people.

66 "An MOH", 'Slum Life in Finsbury' National Health No.91. New Series no.52, April 1917, 181.

67 *Idem.*, 'The Needs of the School Child' No.92, May 1917, 219.

68 M. Bondfield, 'The National Care of Maternity' *Idem.*, No.64. New Series no.25 July 1914, 5-10. In the following year the Guild published Maternity, a collection of letters from working women on their childbirth experiences, which gained wide publicity.

paediatrician and a leader in campaigns for sex education and infant welfare; Dr Murray Leslie, paediatrician and secretary of the Women's Imperial Health Association; Dr Mary Scharlieb, consultant and veteran woman surgeon; Norah March, writer, speaker and training college lecturer; Dr Caleb Saleeby, prolific eugenist writer and publicist; Benjamin Broadbent, pioneer in the voluntary infant welfare movement; Dr C. W. Kimmins, Chief Inspector of Schools for the London Authority.

Further evidence on attitudes held by teachers, school medical officers, charitable and care committee workers and others concerned with elementary school children can be drawn from a group of conference reports dating from shortly before the First World War. These also provide indications of the extent and interrelation of eugenist, feminist and purity campaigners' influence, and of differing approaches to acute social problems. Thus a conference organised by the Eugenics Education Society and held in London in 1913 on the teaching of eugenics in school attracted considerable support from several hundred teachers and resolved itself rapidly into a discussion of sex education in schools. There was great divergence of views but, as one speaker put it, 'One could feel that a change was coming and when one attended a conference of this kind and heard the matter aired and discussed one felt what a relief it was to have the topic brought systematically into the light of day'. The issue of eugenics slipped into the background during the discussion. One committed eugenist attempted to revive it, proposing that children from the age of twelve upwards might learn the dangers of 'careless or thoughtless marriages' by means of teachers presenting them with well-attested pedigrees showing the results of marriages between cousins, especially those of 'tainted stock', of alcoholics and the like. Although the speaker was a Professor of Education the experienced teachers present ignored the contribution and continued their discussion of what was or was not practicable in schools.[69]

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69 Report of the Eugenics Education Conference Eugenics Review Vol.5, April 1913 - January 1914, 1-64.

In the same year a detailed report of a conference, held in 1912 and sponsored by the National Food Reform Association, was published under the title, indicative of current preoccupations, of Rearing an Imperial Race. Once again the discussions were sharp, practical and detailed reflecting a wide range of opinion. Among issues addressed were the administration of school meals, arguments over the promotion of cleanliness and neatness among schoolgirls, the need for domestic subjects to be taught to both sexes, and particular problems of domestic subjects teaching in London.[70] The Editor expanded the book by incorporating other articles including one criticism from a London care committee worker on standards of welfare provision in London schools, contrasting these with services provided for schoolchildren in Paris.[71]

A third conference held early in 1914 concerned criminal assaults on children and referred entirely to girls. The participants, largely clergy and workers of both sexes in various charitable and social welfare organisations, revealed a spectrum of opinion towards the victims of assault ranging from the punitive to the deeply sympathetic.[72] None of the women speakers present could have been described as feminist, but both they and some of the men took up the issue, frequently raised in the feminist press, of the isolation of girl victims at all-male court hearings, and the prejudice frequently displayed towards them.[73] Among such speakers, Mrs Clare Goslett of the Mothers' Union was a notable figure. Articles by her appeared in The Shield, journal of the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, and important as a source for assessing the connection between Purity movement campaigners and those involved in the women's movement.[74]

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70 C. E. Hecht (ed.), Rearing an Imperial Race being a report of the Second Guildhall Conference on Diet, Cookery and Hygiene (London 1913).

71 George Rainey, 'Necessitous Children in London and Paris' in Hecht, *ibid.*, 410-424, reprinted from School Hygiene November 1912.

72 Report of the Conference on Criminal Assaults on Children n.p. The Report is considered in more detail in Chapter IV *infra*.

73 See Chapter IV *infra*. nn. 37 and 38.

74 The Association later became the Josephine Butler Society.

Beyond these sources directly concerned with children a considerable body of material on working-class family matters provides important evidence for the home experience of daughters. The National Birth-rate Commission set up under the auspices of the National Council for Public Morals published reports in 1916, 1920 and 1923. The first of these, The Declining Birth-rate, though much concerned with moral issues over contraception, raised largely by clerical witnesses, included material on family size and family limitation in relation to overcrowding and fear of eviction; on the relation between family size and married women's need to work outside the home, an important consideration for daughters at school; and on the possibility of the teaching of sex hygiene in elementary schools. This last matter also arose in the second report, Problems of Population and Parenthood, and again in far more detail in the third, Youth and the Race, which is a valuable source for an assessment as to how far and in what terms the question of sex education had been opened up to teachers in training and at meetings of teachers and parents. The National Council for the Combatting of Venereal Disease (NCCVD) provided much of the impetus for attempts at sex education. It was set up following the final report of the Royal Commission on the subject in 1916.[75]

The intense preoccupation on the part of health and education authorities with the alleged shortcomings of working-class mothers in relation to the running of homes, personal behaviour, care of infants and training of daughters led to controversy, often bitter in tone, as to how far such accusations were valid, how far based on unproven assumptions (as with charges of drunkenness for example) or how far they were the result of total misunderstanding by middle-class critics of the circumstances of life in urban working-class communities. Two women contributors to The Nineteenth Century and After between the years 1910 and 1919 provide a striking contrast in attitudes. Edith Sellers, the elder of the two, took as her targets the inability of girls, boys and women earning good money in

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75 Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases Final Report [Cd. 8189] 1916. The NCCVD was later to become the British Social Hygiene Council. Its work for sex education is discussed in Chapter IV *infra*.

wartime to save for the future; the folly, for which she blamed the school inspectorate among others, of inadequate domestic education, particularly needlework, for girls; the resistance of working-class mothers to sending children to school rather than seeing attendance there as a privilege; and the decay in young people's manners and behaviour especially that of girls, arising from the war.[76]

Sellers, a woman with experience of youth, educational and Poor Law work in several European countries was no mere termagant, but presented in these articles the exasperation of the well-informed expert unable to impose her standards on her inferiors and reduced to deploring their mistakes.[77] By contrast the other contributor, Anna Martin, was concerned not to deplore but to champion. Her field of observation was Bermondsey where she lived and worked from 1899 to the 1930s. Her anger was directed at those who judged and frequently condemned the actions and lifestyle of working-class women as seen through a distorting glass of preconception and prejudice. Foremost among the concepts she sought to drive home in a series of articles was recognition of the poverty of the wife and mother within the family unit, with all that this implied in terms of sexual and other forms of subservience to the male breadwinner. She described the amazed and critical reactions of visitors to working-class districts seeing women, obviously poor, buying 'early peas and the best rump steak'.

> "How can the poor live" such observers indignantly ask, "when the wives are so reckless and extravagant?" And as the present fashion

76 E. Sellers, 'Wilful Waste and Woeful Want' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.79, March 1916, 670-685.
'An Antediluvian on Education of Working-class Girls' *idem.*, Vol.80, August 1916, 337-349.
'The Elementary Schoolchild's Mother' *idem.*, Vol.83, March 1918, 553-566.
'Boy and Girl War Products' *idem.*, Vol.84, October 1918, 702-716.

77 References in Edith Sellers's articles in The Nineteenth Century and After and The Contemporary Review suggest considerable knowledge of European conditions. She published books on the Poor Law in Denmark and elsewhere and submitted written evidence to the Royal Commission on the Poor Law (Vol.9 [Cd. 5068] Appendix 82, 1910) in Denmark, Berlin, Vienna and Hungary.

is they call for more education and demand that all girls shall be compelled to attend courses of domestic science. It never seems to occur to such critics that were the matron of the slums the inept creature she is so often deemed, neither she nor her children could survive. She cannot afford to be a fool. Absolutely at the pecuniary mercy of her husband she has learnt from experience that in the long run she serves the interest of the family best by "pleasing him about his food".

Just as Anna Martin rejected the view that improved domestic education for girls would solve problems at home, so she castigated those who chided poverty-stricken mothers for working outside the home rather than coming close to starvation by remaining in it, and who looked to 'improved education in the domestic sphere' to inspire future mothers to stay at home during their children's infancy. Ameliorative measures, exercised through health and education authorities, which ignored the root problem of the mother's poverty were analysed in detail in her articles and seen not only as being 'another turn of the screw' for mothers but as undermining and denigrating their knowledge and authority as parents.[78]

Since the great majority of adolescents did not go on to any form of secondary or full-time trade or technical school, the question of how best to provide part-time continued education, day or evening, general or vocational, aroused investigation, comment and controversy on a national scale in the first two decades of the century. In relation to girls this forms part of the study of school leavers in Chapter VI *infra*. Contemporary sources available for this debate starkly reveal the rift between what moralists and educationists considered to be right and acceptable and what family needs and demands of employers dictated. For boys the advocates of further education were above all concerned to guard them against the

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78 A. Martin, (See Appendix I) 'The Married Working Woman : A Study' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.68, December 1910, 1102-1118 and Vol.69, January 1911, 108-122.
'The Mother and Social Reform' *idem.*, Vol.73, May and June 1913, 1060-1097 and 1235-1255.
'Working Women and Drink' *idem.*, Vol.78, December 1915, 1378-1395 and Vol.79, January 1916, 85-104.
'The Irresponsibility of the Father' *idem.*, Vol.84, December 1918, 1091-1103; Vol.85, March and May 1919, 548-562 and 956-970.

blind-alley job - the quick money to be earned by the school leaver for a few years leading to the likelihood of unemployment or at best unskilled casual labour. For girl school leavers, monotonous factory work or any jobs involving little skill or chance of training were routinely deplored by commentators more for their immediate moral and physical ill effects than for long term consequences. Given the current heavy emphasis on marriage and motherhood it is rare, however, to find the question of neglect of skills being seriously addressed as a problem for the girl who would need to return to wage-earning as a woman later in life. One writer even advanced the view that girls rather than boys should be employed in blind-alley jobs 'since as a rule the girl does not look forward to being a wage-earner when she grows up'.[79]

Official and other substantial sources for this debate include Michael Sadler's Symposium on Continuation Schools of 1908,[80] the report of the Select Committee on Attendance at Continuation Schools of 1909,[81] the Lewis Report of 1917 forecasting the further education clauses of the Education Act,[82] and the report of the Principals of the London Day Continuation Schools. This was issued in 1922 not long before the experiment was closed down.[83] All these advocated continued education and in some there was specific reference to girls, notably in the article by Catherine Webb quoted by Sadler,[84] and in a section on the needs of urban girls in the 1909 Report.[85] Relevant articles on girl school leavers in the educational, child-orientated, and occasionally the feminist press raise a number of questions such as : whether the 'womanly' arts or general

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79 E.H.C. Wethered, 'Juvenile Labour Exchanges' The Child Vol.4, No.12, September 1914, 1021.

80 M. Sadler (ed.), Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere (Manchester 1908).

81 Consultative Committee Report on Attendance (compulsory or otherwise) at Continuation Schools Vol.1, Report and Appendices [Cd. 4757] 1909.

82 Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War (Final Report) [Cd. 8512] 1917.

83 Survey of the First Year's Work : Extracts from Reports by Principals, Presented to the Education Committee of the LCC, 22 February 1922.

84 C. Webb, 'The Need for Compulsory Continuation Schools : A Plea on behalf of Girls' University Review Vol.III, No.4, June 1906, 363-368. Quoted in Sadler, *ibid.*, 702-704.

85 'Special Needs of Girls in Urban Districts' Consultative Committee Report *ibid.*, 202-204.

education should have priority in extra educational time; whether evening classes were a desirable or even a possible option for girls given the length of the working day for many and the burden of domestic duties at home; and whether in mixed classes girls were likely to find subjects being dealt with exclusively in boys' terms.

With the publication of the Education Bill in 1917 the debate became more animated and hopeful. The normally staid Journal of Education in a euphoric paragraph prophesied that if the day continuation clauses of the Bill became law 'hundreds and thousands of our boys and girls will be saved from drifting into blind-alley occupations, reformatories and jails'. The article warned that to achieve this the purpose and nature of part-time education would have to be re-thought completely and that for girls the moral guidance of skilled and sympathetic women teachers must be available since 'just at the period of dawning womanhood when the girl of the educated classes is being specially guarded and looked after by her mother, the girl of the working class is turned out to fend for herself'.[86]

Despite the genuine concern expressed about the care and control needed for school leavers, there is a certain unreality in these surveys and comments concentrating as they do on morals and behaviour. There is a tendency to skirt round or ignore the harsh problems of working life, including the question of who were, in fact, to undertake the despised blind-alley jobs ? This contrast is illustrated in a collection of essays and reports of 1918 edited by J. J. Findlay, Professor of Education at Manchester University, under the title The Young Wage-Earner.[87] Two of the essays specifically concerned girls. The Professor of Education at Southampton wrote on the transition from home to industrial life. He deplored the decay during the war of the 'homing tendency of the minds and bodies of our adolescent girls - the rock on which national morality is

86 F. B. Low, 'The Girl and the Continuation School' Journal of Education October 1917, 584.

87 J.J.Findlay (ed.), The Young Wage-Earner and the Problem of his Education : Essays and Reports edited by J.J. Findlay with the Committee of the Uplands Association (London 1918).

built' and evisaged the intensive social training of adolescents as the 'armament' with which 'the forces of social disruption must be met'.[88] By contrast Emily Mathias, writing as superintendent of women employees in a Bradford factory, was concerned with the nature of factory labour which she saw as 'repressive to a high degree' and inevitably resulting in rowdy and uncontrolled behaviour after work. She noted the positive social tendencies that developed among the girls including a strong fellow feeling with their workmates. The 'immoral' factors in the workshop were, she considered, monotony, irresponsibility and fatigue. As for continued education she saw little value in concentration on 'frills' such as domestic economy classes, blouse making and Morris dancing unless the fundamental character of the work itself was tackled. She referred particularly to the need for girls to be given some responsibility at the workplace and her approach formed a marked contrast to the previous moral diatribe.[89] Reports in the second section of the book described a number of training experiments in progress including a Bournville experiment in Birmingham and a scheme at Selfridge's in London. Theodora M. Pugh wrote on London girls and trade schools and, while noting the large number of young Londoners who drifted from school into unskilled jobs, discussed proposals and experiments for further education carried out both by the LCC and some large firms.[90] She did not deal with the problems for girls in the multiplicity of small firms and sweatshops, which were a notable feature of the London industrial scene, and it is useful here to compare the material coming from a conference of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union in 1916 in a session on Children in the Industrial World. Susan Lawrence, Labour member of the LCC, urged the need for further educational provision.

> 'I do not know of anything more painful in the poor parts of London than to see the contrast between the material that the school turns

88 J. Shelley, Professor of Education, University College Southampton, 'From Home Life to Industrial Life : with special reference to the Adolescent Girl' in Findlay (ed.), *op.cit.*, 22-32.

89 E. Mathias, 'The Young Factory Girl' in Findlay, *ibid.*, 77-100.

90 T. M. Pugh, 'Working Girls and Trade Schools' (London) *ibid.*, 144-154.

out and the use made of that by the industrial life of the district. You go to a prize giving and you see little boys and girls surrounded by everything that is clean, wholesome and pleasant; London schools are places like another world when you contrast them with the industrial world around. Later on you see the same children with the habits of the factory and the streets and the marks of overwork upon them. We want to have these children under instruction and under the supervision of the education authority from 14 to 18.

Sylvia Pankhurst supported her in the discussion from her own knowledge of the gross overwork of young girls in East London. Both spoke of employment conditions that bore little relation to the eugenist-inspired moralising of some writing on continued education for girls.[91]

The controversy over compulsory day continuation classes from 1918 to the ending of the major London experiment in 1922 contains little specifically related to girls apart from material on syllabuses and organisation in E. A. Waterfall's account of some London schools.[92] Apart from this the arguments are conducted in terms of boys or at least without specifying gender. The denunciation of the compulsion principle in 1918 by the Federation of British Industries drew a strong counter-attack not only from sections of the teacher press[93] but also from The Athenaeum. An article headed 'Capitalism and Education' claimed that the Federation's inspiration 'is drawn from the hum and bustle of the busy workshop feverishly producing profits and from the ecstasy of the fat balance sheet'. A response from an anonymous Federation member followed under the title 'Education : The Case for Commonsense' pointing out that money for further education could only mean less for schooling

91 Report of the Second (Biennial) Conference of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union Held in London at Central Hall Westminster, 5-7 July 1916. The official objects of the Union were 'To secure for the women in the British Dominions the same political rights as are enjoyed by the men and to arouse women to a fuller sense of their duties and responsibilities as citizens'. The Conference is dealt with more fully in Chapter VI *infra* .

92 E. A. Waterfall, The Day Continuation School in England : Its Function and Future (London 1923).

93 For example, 'The Philistines and Education', The London Teacher Editorial, 15 February 1918. This weekly journal was independent of the NUT until 1922, when the London Teachers' Association joined the national body.

up to fourteen.[94] A serious attempt to think through the implications of the Act for employers was made in Basil Yeaxlee's Working out the Fisher Act in which he discussed Labour opposition to a part-time solution.[95] This was the theme of R. H. Tawney's Secondary Education for All : A Policy for Labour which appeared in 1922.[96] The most revealing and indeed remarkable contribution to the debate was contained in the Principals' Report to the Education Committee mentioned earlier. They enumerated the advances made in the compulsory day continuation schools in one year in the face of prejudice and opposition from employers and parents, and of grave shortages of buildings and equipment. They pointed out the difficulty of enforcing compulsory attendance within the County of London surrounded by heavily populated urban areas in which day continuation was either not in force or, as in West Ham, was voluntary.[97] The brief life of the London schools is dealt with in Chapter VI *infra* .

In the final section of this chapter it is proposed to focus on certain aspects of the London Education Authority before and during the war, in order to provide a background for the more detailed approach taken in later chapters.

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94 Unsigned article in The Athenaeum No.4627, March 1918, 131-134, followed by the response in No.4629, May 1918, 223-226. As well as the attack on compulsory day continuation schools, the Federation, while agreeing to a leaving age of fourteen for all, called for a different type of schooling at twelve years old for all those not going on to full-time secondary or technical education. Those left behind should receive a more general training to develop 'character, general intelligence and powers of observation' rather than increased study of educational subjects. This proposal also came under fierce attack. See also Times Educational Supplement 28 February 1918, 89-90.

95 B. A. Yeaxlee, Working Out the Fisher Act : The human aspect of the continuation schools (Oxford 1921). Yeaxlee was Secretary of the YMCA Universities Committee.

96 R. H. Tawney, Secondary Education for All : A Policy for Labour. Edited for the Education Advisory Committee of the Labour Party (London 1922).

97 Survey of the First Year's Work *op. cit.*

London County Council Education Authority

Education Authority Divisions

I. Chelsea
Fulham
Hammersmith
Kensington

II. Hampstead
Paddington
St. Marylebone
St. Pancras
Westminster

III. Finsbury
Holborn
Islington

IV. Hackney
Shoreditch
Stoke Newington

V. Bethnal Green
City
Poplar
Stepney

VI. Deptford
Greenwich
Woolwich

VII. Camberwell
Lewisham

VIII. Bermondsey
Lambeth
Southwark

IX. Battersea
Wandsworth

(The shading in certain boroughs arises from colouring on the original map and should be ignored.)

*Some figures for 1913/1914

590 Public Elementary Maintained Schools, directly under the Authority (together with nearly 400 Voluntary 'Non-provided' schools).
Accommodation for 610,020 pupils. Average attendance 510,987 (approx. half and half boys and girls).

*Board of Education, Statistics of Public Education 1913/14

ii Problems and Issues in Elementary Education confronting the London Education Authority

The London Authority was unique in the country both as regards its size and the complexity of its problems. Under the Act of 1903 the dual inheritance of the work of the London School Board and of the Technical Education Board together with the responsibility for secondary education brought a range of duties which stretched from nursery to university levels. Since there was no delegation to 'Part III' authorities as provided by the1902 Education Act elsewhere in the country, the London County Council Education Committee took over direct control of 512 public elementary schools and 455 non-provided voluntary schools, involving a total child population, more or less equally divided between girls and boys, of approximately 800,000.[98] The relationship of the administrative County of London to the surrounding areas brought its own peculiar problems. The County, an area of 120 square miles with a population of some four and a half million, was closely surrounded by an outer zone with another two and a quarter million. An historical survey made in 1920 as part of the introduction to a scheme produced under the Education Act of 1918 noted that

> The dividing lines are neither industrial, nor economic nor geographical. They rest on traditional and statutory authority. Further, residence and occupation are often far apart and millions travel daily forwards and backwards across unseen lines of demarcation, largely oblivious of their existence. The site and use of institutions offering education "for the needs of the locality" has at length become a serious problem for all the authorities in the area of Greater London.[99]

98 Board of Education Statistics of Public Education in England and Wales 1903-4-5 [Cd.2782] 1905. 48. There was accommodation for 578,395 children in Council schools and 243,447 in non-provided schools. The actual average attendance was given as 654,993, i.e. 86.8%. Ten years later in the Statistics for 1913-1914 [Cd.8097] the school numbers were given as 590 and 366 respectively.

99 London County Council Education Act 1918 : Scheme of the Local Education Authority LCC Official Publications Vol.211, No.2033.

The determination to establish an all-embracing Education Authority for London was a central feature in 1902-1903 of the political battles and manoeuverings preceding the act of 1903. Among the majority Progressive party on the LCC were those still hoping for some form of 'ad hoc' solution - what Beatrice Webb scornfully described as a 'Water Board' authority for education. She and her husband were foremost among the advocates of full LCC control, and saw the 'ad hoc' proposals as representing the views of National Union of Teacher partisans, who were likely to pursue in London the bitter denominational controversies that followed the Act of 1902, and were, moreover, considered to be without serious interest in higher education. Beatrice noted in her diary for March 1903

> We don't believe you can raise the standard of elementary education and save it from mere mechanical efficiency unless you have the university in organic connection with it; unless you have mobility from the assistant master to the research professor ... It lacks imagination to think that elementary education can be stimulating and progressive except as the broad base to higher learning.[100]

They were among those equally opposed to the fragmentation of London education by the handing over of any serious power to the Metropolitan boroughs. In July 1903 Beatrice noted with satisfaction

> The Education Bill passed through Committee in almost exactly the same shape as Sidney would have given to it : the LCC absolutely supreme, the borough councils relegated to the quite subordinate part of selecting the majority of the local managers, but these having no more power than the LCC chooses to give them.[101]

Sidney Webb's article in The Nineteenth Century and After in October 1903 dealt with the problems and possibilities of the new Authority. He emphasised the difficulty of trying, since the ending of the Revised Code, to assess the quality of London elementary education with its schools ranging from the hundred or so best, inviting comparison with good elementary

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100 N. and J. Mackenzie (eds). The Diaries of Beatrice Webb Vol.II, 1892-1905, 14 March 1903 (London 1983) 273.

101 *Ibid.*, 15 June 1903, 281.

schools anywhere in the world, to the large number 'which would probably be condemned as inefficient ... by a Swiss, a Danish, a Saxon, a Prussian or a Massachusetts school inspector'. These latter, some of them former Board schools and even more among the voluntary sector, involved some 200,000 London children, more than the combined child population of Manchester and Birmingham. His article also surveyed teacher supply and training, secondary and evening education, and ended with a serious plea that religious controversy should not be allowed to damage the new order for London schools.[102]

The first two decades of the new Authority were dominated by the work and personality of Robert (later Sir Robert) Blair who, after an initial four years from 1904-1908 of uneasy and divided authority, took full control as Education Officer a position which he continued to hold until 1924. This process has been well described in recent studies together with the structure of the London Authority, the scope of its work, and relations between the Education Officer and the Education Committee.[103] Blair had no previous connection with London education, an important consideration in view of the persistance of fierce loyalties to the London School Board traditions. From 1908 he established his authority at every level of the new administration and to a considerable extent over Council members as well. In spite of some occasions needing circumspection and some downright failures in achieving his objectives 'the enduring and significant impression of Blair's relationship with the Education Committee and its sub-committees was that of the professional administrator asserting his position and exercising a more strongly direct influence than at any previous time in the development of London's educational provision'. [104]

Another authoritative figure in these years was the runner-up at Blair's appointment in 1904, Dr C. W. Kimmins, Chief Inspector to the Technical

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102 S. Webb, 'London Education' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.54, October 1903,561-579.

103 P. H. Andrews, The Organisation, Development and Administration of Public Education in the area of the London County Council 1903-1922 Unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of London 1963. D. W. Thoms, Policy-making in Education : Robert Blair and the London County Council 1904-1924 (Leeds 1980). Blair was knighted in 1914.

104 Thoms, *ibid.*, 9.

Education Board since 1900, and appointed Chief Inspector to the new Education Authority in 1904, a post he held until 1922. In papers relating to the appointment of Kimmins's successor Blair makes clear the unique scope of the Chief Inspector's work in London covering every variety of function from nursery school to university.[105] Under the new Authority the LCC inspectorate was re-organised with four divisional, twelve district and fourteen assistant inspectors, assisted by over forty specialist supervisors for special schools, science, art, music, physical education, handicraft, domestic economy and infant schools.

The conflict of policy nationally between the appointment of inspectors from the ranks of elementary school teachers as opposed to the introduction of university graduates had its counterpart in the London service in these years. Giving evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service in 1913, Blair confirmed that recent appointments to the London inspectorate showed a preference for university men.[106] The question arose because a previous witness examined in November 1912 had remarked on and complained of this policy. W. D. Bentliff, representing the NUT and himself a London headmaster, regretted the change, pointing out that the older type of London School Board inspector really knew the children and had personal experience of the schools. Even within the formal constraints of Royal Commission procedure, the resentment of teachers at this and other aspects of LCC policy is manifest in his evidence.[107] The London Teacher, weekly organ of the London Teachers' Association and representing some 15,000 members, from time to time voiced criticism at the over-exposure of these hard-working men and women to both Board and LCC inspection. The Times Educational Supplement endorsed this view in 1914. While acknowledging that HMI inspection had diminished, the combination and overlapping of two sets of

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105 GLRO EO/STA/3/3 Appointment of the Chief Inspector 1922.

106 Royal Commission on the Civil Service : 4th Report of the Commissioners Minutes of Evidence 1914 [Cd.7340]. Evidence of Mr R. Blair, 25 April 1913. Q.35, 555.

107 *Ibid.*, 3rd Report of the Commissioners 1913 [Cd.6739]. Evidence of Mr W. D. Bentliff, 1 November 1912.

inspectors was seen as 'disturbing to the teachers and of no particular benefit'.[108] Reference has already been made to the difficulty for teachers in steering a course acceptable to the inspectors between over-controlled traditional management of classes and greater freedom and flexibility which could lead to poor achievement in the basic subjects.

A useful vantage point from which to view the problems and achievements of the elementary schools halfway through Blair's tenure of office is provided by a confidential statement drawn up by him in the summer of 1915 which was circulated to and discussed by the various sub-committees of the Education Committee. Entitled Some Problems of Education in London, it followed a Treasury decision that no more captial expenditure was to be undertaken. This presented, in Blair's words 'a convenient moment to take stock of the problems affecting public education in London, and to reconsider in the light of ten years' experience what old problems still await solution and what new ones have arisen'.[109]

Taking this survey as a starting point and relating it to other statements and publications from before and after 1915, some light can be thrown on the concerns of the elementary schools, many of which will be explored in later chapters. Blair opened his statement by asserting firmly that in spite of all defects large and small the advances of the previous ten years had been enormous. 'It might in fact not unfairly be said that it is the rapidity and extent of the advance which has revealed some of the larger defects.' Later in a discussion with one of the sub-committees he echoed Sidney Webb's contrast of 1903.

> Five hundred of our schools are probably the best in the world. I have been told this over and over again by people who know. I have also been told by these people that we have probably among civilised nations the worst schools in the world. Whether it is five

108 'Education and Local Patriotism' Times Educational Supplement Unsigned article, 1 December 1914, 191-192.

109 GLRO EO/GEN/5/21 Report by the Education Officer to the Education (General Purposes sub-) Committee 14 July 1915.

> hundred or four hundred does not matter, but there is a very bad tail to our schools.[110]

Presumably 'the worst in the world' could not be stomached by some, for a week later he substituted 'very bad'.

The particular problems that emerged in his statement and subsequent discussions included : class sizes and the progress of the '40/48' scheme; domestic subjects and handicraft teaching provision; the problem of the backward older child, and of how best to deal with those remaining after the departure of some children to secondary and central schools;[111] the over-liberalising of the curriculum and dissipation of energies; the need to achieve better relations between teachers and care committee workers; and the direction of children at fourteen into suitable employment.

Dr Thom's study of Blair deals at some length with the '40/48' scheme, using it as an illustration of the relationship between the Board of Education and local education authorities in the pre-war period when the interface between the two was still ill-defined.[112] The London plan to reduce class sizes for senior elementary and infant classes to maximum levels of 40 and 48 respectively followed a Board of Education decision in 1910 to cut the London grant-in-aid by £10,000. This was to be a sharp lesson to the Authority that something must be done at once to reduce the size of grossly overlarge classes which frequently exceeded 60 and in some cases reached 80 in infant departments. The Council produced a fifteen-year plan which by 1915 had been in operation for three years and, if circumstances had been normal, was due for completion by 1926-1927. Blair in 1915 referred to it as being one-fifth of the way to full implementation, but of course further progress was at a standstill. It represented in his view 'the highwater mark of educational thought and

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110 Report, *op.cit.* Education Officer's reply to discussion with the Attendance and Accommodation sub-Committee, July 1915.

111 Central Schools, instituted by the LCC in 1910 numbered 50 by 1914. Entry was at 11 for a 3-4 year course. Schools had a commercial or an industrial bias, sometimes combining the two.

112 Thoms, *op. cit.*, 18-26.

power in respect of school accommodation and small classes'.[113] Understandably he did not refer to the humiliating measures taken by the Board to coerce the LCC, nor to the fact that he himself had assisted the Board by a considerable flow of confidential information designed to put pressure on the Education Committee.[114] Although not touched on in Blair's review it should be remembered that from 1914 onwards the requisition of schools for hospitals and other wartime uses also affected class sizes. Between March and June 1915 accommodation had to be arranged for some 15-25,000 hospital beds nationally. Dr Addison wrote later 'It was a heartbreaking business for those who loved education to have to arrange that a first-rate elementary school, a technical school or a museum should be emptied and made use of for hospital beds, but this had to be done. The LCC gave us a good start wtih 4,400 beds'.[115]

In his comment in 1915 on accommodation for domestic economy and handicraft classes Blair recalled that in 1905 it had been decided to continue with the policy of locating these in special centres used by several schools and that it was too late to reverse this. He reckoned the shortage of places by 1915 to be forty centres for domestic studies and thirty for manual training. The pros and cons of the centres' policy from the point of view of the schools are discussed in Chapter III i *infra* in relation to girls.

The treatment of the older backward pupil was raised in the 1915 review. 'In the last year for which figures are available', wrote Blair, 'something like one child in every twelve left at fourteen from Standard IV or lower' and in addition 'a large draft of backward children were already removed to special schools'.[116] This was part of the much debated question of how best to organise the work of the top classes following the upheaval

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113 GLRO EO/GEN/5/21 Report to Education (General Purposes sub-) Committee *op. cit.*

114 Thoms, *op. cit.*, 10.

115 C. Addison MD MP, Politics from Within 1911-1918 (London 1924) 45. Addison was Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education 1914-1915. Served in other wartime ministries and became first Minister of Health 1919-1921.

116 GLRO EO/GEN/5/21 *ibid.*,

of the Junior County Scholarship and central school transfers, so as to ensure that the twelve to fourteen year-olds were not regarded as a 'residuum', a derogatory phrase sometimes applied to them, marking time until they could leave school. The LCC held firmly to the principle of the fourteenth birthday as the earliest leaving age even during the war. A small number were allowed to leave under the 'Labour Certificate' arrangement but this accounted for under 1,000 a year and was agreed to unwillingly by the authorities. Indeed some London head teachers deliberately held back younger bright children from reaching Standard VII - a requirement for the Certificate - in order to prevent them from applying for it. In the course of his evidence in 1913 to the Royal Commission on the Civil Service referred to above, Blair was questioned in detail about the transfer of pupils in London to secondary education on the basis of the examination taken between ten and eleven years of age. While many pupils would not be considered ready to take the examination at that age, a large number were entered for it, probably some 23,000 in London of whom the vast majority would not gain a scholarship or a free place. Between 1,600 and 1,700 would succeed every year, with another 300 or so taking scholarships offered to 'late-bloomers' between thirteen and fourteen years old bringing the total roughly to 2,000, more or less equally divided between girls and boys.[117] Blair was not asked in his evidence about central or trade schools, but other figures suggest a total of about 5,000 to the central schools with another 800-1,000 leaving for full-time trade schools which were entered at thirteen.[118] In his 1913 evidence Blair considered that those who reached secondary school probably represented all those capable of profiting by it. He dismissed as negligible the numbers passing the examination and then prevented by poverty or some other cause from taking up a place. Different conclusions were reached, however, by an investigation of promotion in London elementary schools undertaken

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117 Royal Commission on the Civil Service 4th Report *op.cit.* Evidence of Mr R. Blair.

118 GLRO EO/GEN/6/18 gives approximately 2,100 boys and girls in full-time trade schools which included some one year domestic courses for girls, and an entry of approximately 800 a year. Later figures given in EO/GEN/6/18 for 1917 give higher figures of 600 trade scholarships to boys and girls and 460 domestic economy scholarships for one year. See also Education Vol.28, 10 November 1916 on girls obtaining trade scholarships.

by the Board of Education and published in 1919.[119]

In this investigation the effects on the schools of these two sets of transfers were examined in some detail, in particular how the examinations affected those who did not pass. In the run up to the Junior County Scholarship examination subjects were often dropped to concentrate on written composition and arithmetic and 'It is doubtful whether sufficient provision as a rule is made even in ... large schools, for the further education of those who have completed the examination without success. The absence of such provision largely explains the mental inertia so often observed in the children of upper classes of elementary schools'.[120] The Report had found numerous cases

> in which promising children have passed through Standards I., II. and III. in two years (or in one year and a half, or occasionally by 'jumping' one of the classes even in a year). As one head teacher said "I frequently succeed in spotting my scholarship winners in Standard II." Yet some of these bright children fail to win scholarships or to secure entry into Central Schools, and no provision is made within the Elementary School for the kind of advanced instruction by which they could obviously benefit.[121]

A section of the Report which looked at curriculum and aims of the upper standards in the London elementary schools, referred to 'the accumulated evidence that in spite of the transference of selected children in steadily rising numbers to secondary and central schools, there still remains in the upper classes a high proportion of children above average ability'. They were not for the most part being given the new and stimulating work that they needed.

> It is very surprising to find that in many schools few or no modifications of the curriculum have been made in recent years to meet the changed conditions. ... The effects on the children of this

119 Board of Education Memoranda on Promotions in London Elementary Schools Educational Pamphlets No.35, Elementary Schools Series, No.1, 1919.

120 *Ibid.*, 27.

121 *Ibid.*, 26-27.

lack of a new orientation are in some few schools most regrettable. We have found far too many cases of young bright children spending two or even three years in Standard VII., doing the same narrow tasks over and over again until they are 14 and can leave school. In some schools the proportion of children in Standards VI. and VII., uninterested in their work, is out of all proper relation to the number of such children in the lower classes; the school becomes observedly less strenuous, less stimulating, less interesting after about Standard V.[122]

A London head teacher was reported as saying that one result of the 'drainage' of this double system of removals to secondary and central schools was 'to convert the qualifying Standards V., VI. and VII. into a residuum or intellectual hotch-potch, and the teachers responsible for their future have a hopeless task in attempting to put up a respectable standard of work'.[123] Nevertheless a number of head teachers were addressing these problems constructively. The 'definitely dull and backward' were in some schools organised into a special class with a practical bias 'under a particularly gifted teacher', while for the others schemes of work were completely recast so that 'no child is at a standstill'. The Report included examples of how some individual schools were tackling the work, taking schools, seven of them girls' departments, from both poor and prosperous neighbourhoods.[124]

This survey of the problem in 1919 looking back as it does over the previous few years is directly relevant to the discussions (see Chapter III *infra*) on the place of domestic studies and infant care teaching for older girls and the proper relationship of these to other school subjects. In the course of discussions on Blair's Report of 1915 there was heavy criticism of the teaching of arithmetic, history and geography to girls in particular. Shortcomings revealed when girls at thirteen attempted the trade school examination included failure to answer the simplest questions on the geography of Europe including the whereabouts and even the sympathies

122 Memoranda on Promotions *op.cit.*, 31.

123 *Ibid.*, 35. It is interesting to note the use of the perjorative word 'drainage' by a head teacher to describe the process by which brighter children were selected for transfer.

124 *Ibid.*, 36-39.

of nations involved in the war. Predictably mention of such failures led to strictures on the over-great liberty allowed to head teachers and the dissipation of energies, but without any serious consideration of the problems that head teachers actually faced.[125] The case for a more standardized elementary school curriculum, not in order to impose old rigidities but to help in particular the many children moving school, was made in 1919 in the Journal of Experimental Pedagogy. It was supposed to have general application in spite of being cast almost totally in male terms.

> What a headmaster actually does is to patch up a curriculum which is normally a mosaic formed of much that is current in the schools around him, of a few things introduced on account of his own or his staff's personal predilections and of a good deal that he imagines the inspectors will look for. It would be interesting to get a body of headmasters to confess how they have severally attacked this gigantic task. Some have faced it manfully. Some have shelved the difficulty by blindly copying the work of those considered to be "sound" and "advanced". Others have gone on from year to year making slight alterations in a curriculum which has come down from the times of the old "code". Not a few have avoided the work by calling on their assistants to do the chief part.

The writer called for a body of experts 'men and women of high intelligence' to tackle the problem.[126]

Attention has been drawn above to some of the tensions existing within the London elementary schools - between for example the needs of examinees and of slower and more backward pupils; between staff reared in an older more rigid tradition and those aware of new pedagogic trends; between teachers and inspectors drawn from different educational backgrounds; between teachers aware of the acute social problems in pupils' lives and the care committee workers whose duty it was to tackle them. Added to these the stress caused by staff shortages during the war was at times profound and, it is reasonable to assume, affected serious

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125 GLRO EO/GEN/5/21 Report to Education (General Purposes sub-) Committee *op.cit.*

126 B. Dumville, 'The Case for Standardization of the Curriculum in Elementary and other Schools' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.5, No.1, 1919-1920, 18-27.

consideration of curriculum planning. It is relevant therefore to conclude this survey of some problems within the London Authority by referring to the angry reaction of teachers to attacks on staffing levels.

The Education Officer's review of education problems in 1915 might be likened to a survey from the Captain's Bridge. If the metaphor is continued there was unrest almost flaring into mutiny below decks. In October 1915 a programme of war economies for London education was published which bore heavily on the elementary schools. It involved the loss in most senior departments and in central schools of one assistant teacher, while in certain schools the head teacher had to be responsible for a class. At the same time the circumstances in which a 'supply' teacher was to be allowed were to be restricted sharply. Minor concessions, in return, reduced the amount of clerical work required of heads and cut the number of visitors to schools. The London Teacher headed its editorial for 29 October 1915 'A Smashing Blow to London's Education' and followed this up in the December issue by placing the blame squarely on the Government with the connivance of the LCC Education Committee. It was reported that a teacher deputation had by hard bargaining achieved some small concessions, and credit was given to the Education Officer for having diverted a probable attack on salaries and increments. Nevertheless an editorial headed 'Are the Teachers Ready for Direct Action?' raised the question of withdrawal of labour which, in the atmosphere of patriotic euphoria of 1915, was a remarkable indication of the extent to which tempers were roused.

> When the will of the Government and the prejudices and desires of the London County Council were imposed upon the fabric of London's Education, there was only one effective thing to be done by London's teaching staff - TO WITHOLD ITS SERVICE FROM THE SCHOOLS. It hurts the susceptibilities of many we know that such an issue should be raised. We take no pleasure in raising it. But with all solemnity we declare that no power on earth could have resisted the educational economies of the Government and the Council except the indignant, violent direct action of the teachers ... WERE LONDON TEACHERS WILLING TO OFFER SUCH RESISTANCE ? If they were then the Joint Defence Committee (the teachers' negotiating body)

> made a grave mistake in not facing that issue, ... and in failing to present such an ultimatum to the Council.[127]

The attack re-opened in February 1916 concentrating on three points of grievance. The London Teacher denied absolutely that there was any teacher shortage. The so-called 'dearth' had been created by the wholesale dismissal of 'supply' teachers whose places were then taken by former permanent teachers liberated by the 1915 reductions in staff. A second point of intense grievance was the introduction of women from outside the profession who after a brief training course costing one guinea (hence their nickname 'the guinea girls') were set to teach the three to five year-olds. These children, excluded from school in some parts of London, could not be removed altogether because of the needs of working mothers in wartime. Women infant school teachers found this innovation particularly insolent as indicating that the authorities considered no particular training to be necessary in order to teach very young children. It was seen as a 'dilution' exercise. A third grievance was the patriotic gloss given to this cost-cutting. The money thus 'saved' would not be used 'to provide shells or build barracks ... It is to remain in the pockets of the ratepayers, foremost among whom are the railway companies, business houses and large property owners, many of whom are already abnormally prosperous with enhanced profits'.[128]

Both the London Teachers' Association and the NUT exhibited a strongly class conscious form of patriotism. If sacrifices were required let them be equally shared. If children were to be taken at eleven to work on the farms, let public schoolboys also be taken. If economies had to be made they should be genuinely for the furtherance of the war and not used to deny good schooling to the poor.

> Our schools are now apparently in the hands of reactionaries who have grave doubts about the wisdom of educating the masses.

127 The London Teacher 10 December 1915, 787.

128 'The Reactionaries' *Idem.*, Editorial, 11 February 1916, 75.

Education is the weapon by which the poor man's child may rise. "Why should we" says the obscurantist "assist the poor man's child to rise ? Keep him down; keep him in his proper place. Give him a smattering of the three Rs; that is good enough. Above all reduce that rate spent and save my pocket." This is the kind of man that the saving will benefit while the schools are being deprived of proper equipment.[129]

Later in the war the militancy of London teachers was more directed towards professional issues, in particular salaries and war bonuses, culminating in the great meeting in 1917 over the LCC's 'humbug bonus'. Teacher distrust of the London Authority may be summed up in the words of an NUT Presidential address at the time of the 1915-1916 battle over economies

> the prestige of London has suffered a severe blow in the eyes of all true educationists in that it has allowed and encouraged its Education Committee to sacrifice the interests of 800,000 children in order to save a twopenny rate. Its absurd panic at the outbreak of war in recalling teachers and children in the middle of the summer holidays, its sweating of supply teachers and its serious reduction of staff under the specious plea of redistribution have seriously impaired the efficiency of its schools and have stamped it as an unworthy guardian of the education of the metropolis of the Empire.[130]

The highly critical attitude of London's teacher leadership towards the Education Committee and its policies, as well as the continuing loyalty to the memory of the London School Board was evident after the war in comments made in 1920 on the LCC Scheme of Education required by the 1918 Act and referred to earlier in this Section.[131] The Scheme's historical survey was attacked as incomplete and biased 'in the opinion of those of us who hold that much more was done before 1904 than has been done since'.

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129 'The Reactionaries' *op.cit.*, The phenomenon of 'radical egalitarianism' and of deep resentment among strongly patriotic people in the First World War at 'the perception of unequal sacrifice' is discussed in relation to housing and rents in D. Englander's Landlord and Tenant in Urban Britain (London 1983) Chapter 10.

130 Presidential Address to the National Union of Teachers Special Conference April 1916. Reported in The Schoolmaster 29 April 1916.

131 See n.99 *supra*.

Indeed claims of progress under the LCC were dismissed as 'hardly ... a characteristic of London education since the School Board was abolished'. It was pointed out that the attendance problem was not tackled in the document and yet 'a quarter of a million are out of school every day, over twenty-five per cent of the grand total' while as for class sizes in spite of the much trumpeted '40/48' scheme, 'the tables show that the number of classes with the impossible roll of 51 to 60 is only four per cent lower in July 1919 than it was ten years before ... and we are warned that there is small hope of speedy amendment'.[132] It is worth noting that these critical comments were made at a time of relative optimism over educational reform before the heavy economies of 1921-1922 and the collapse of the Day Continuation experiment.

This survey of problems and of the attempts to meet them within the London Education Authority provides the background against which the education of girls as it took place in the LCC maintained elementary schools has to be considered. Given the extent to which emphasis in girls' education was concentrated on their family-based future, it is logical to consider first the relations between the schools and the pupils' homes. The extension of state and local authority intervention over attendance, health and cleanliness, applying of course to all children, had particular importance for girls and for their mothers leading to unavoidable tension between them and the heads and staffs of girls' departments.

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132 'Observations of the London Teachers Association on the LCC Scheme of Education' The London Teacher 29 October 1920.

II Co-operation and conflict between Home and School in relation to girls

i Attendance

The main purpose of this section is to consider the matter of compulsory attendance in relation to London elementary schoolgirls. This however has to be studied against the background of general levels of attendance and of contemporary views on the responsibility for reaching and maintaining them. Dr Rubinstein in his study of school attendance under the London School Board refers to a change in public opinion on this matter, observable by the beginning of the twentieth century. 'The Board, the London County Council and the Metropolitan magistrates all suggested ... that London parents had become reconciled to and appreciative of formal education and regular attendance at school. Parents of poor children were themselves former Board scholars and were well accustomed to compulsory attendance.' He refers to a level of elementary school attendance of between 88.7 and 90.1 per cent between 1907 and 1914 achieved by the LCC in its early years as education authority, building on the work of the London School Board.[1] During the First World War levels plummeted at certain times and in certain areas of London, reaching their lowest in 1917-1918 as air raids, migration from London, attendance of children in food queues and the influenza epidemic affected the schools, sometimes bringing averages down to between 40 and 60 per cent. By 1922-1923 averages had once more climbed to over 88 per cent.

Pride in the London achievement was expressed in The School Attendance Gazette in the final year of the London Board, reporting that the 'percentage of regularity' had substantially overtaken that for the whole of England and Wales, in spite of London's many difficulties, and had

1 D. Rubinstein, School Attendance in London : A Social History 1870-1904 (Hull 1969), 114-115.

even beaten Scotland's record. The same journal attributed these good attendance records to the efforts of parents, teachers and school attendance officers rather than to the London authority.[2] The prime importance of this ground-level work is reflected in two statements on attendance submitted by the relevant sub-committee to the LCC Education Committee in 1907 and 1919. That of 1907 attributed an advance in average attendance of 88.0 to 88.2 per cent to several factors. First referred to was the increased value placed on education by parents, though this was directly coupled with a reference to the raising of the maximum penalty under the attendance by-laws from five shillings to one pound, putting a wry gloss on the expression 'increased value'. Greater co-operation between teachers and attendance officers was given as a second factor, and as a third, the extent of prompt action by the officers in dealing with cases of irregular attendance before stringent measures became necessary. The total number of visits paid to parents on attendance matters was given for 1905-1906 as just under four million (3,970,068), an average of 11,540 for each officer.[3]

The importance of close relations between teachers and school attendance officers was re-emphasised in the report of 1919 which included an historical survey. Inquiries were referred to which had shown teachers prepared to be co-operative and to accept some definite responsibility on the educational side 'provided it is clearly understood that the responsibility for enforcing attendance by penal methods will still in all cases devolve upon the attendance staff'.[4]

From these two reports very little emerges that is specific to girls, apart from a table in the 1919 report giving the average ratio of attendance as

2 School Attendance Gazette Vol.4, No.43, December 1903, and No.46, March 1904.

3 Minutes of the Education Committee of the LCC Report of the Buildings and Attendance sub-Committee, 28 January 1907, 528-530. This sub-Committee was retitled 'Accommodation and Attendance' 20 May 1908, and a separate Buildings Committee formed.

4 Minutes *ibid.*, Report from the Attendance and Accommodation sub-Committee on a conference on School Attendance in London 1900-1914, 23 July 1919, 551-557.

between girls and boys for the years 1900- 1914, showing a steady figure of between two and three per cent lower attendance for girls. Thus taking alternate years as examples[5] :

Year	Boys%	Girls%
1904-05	91.7	89.0
1906-07	92.3	90.7
1908-09	92.8	90.7
1910-11	93.1	91.1
1912-13	92.5	90.3

The report does not comment on this discrepancy. The most likely supposition lies in the extent of girls' home duties, possibly exacerbated by the removal of children under five from school. The Board of Education Code of 1905 had given local authorities power to exclude them, and in London it was reckoned that of all the children 'of elementary school status' between the ages of three and five, about one-half were in school in 1905, one-third by 1914 and one-fifth by 1917.[6] Girls' poorer health relative to boys may also have contributed. This was a matter of concern to the London school medical authorities and is discussed further in Chapter III ii *infra*. The Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education emphasised, in 1916, the importance of women health officers as the proper investigators to visit the home if a child were absent from school on alleged medical grounds. They could more efficiently cross-question mothers 'especially where from time to time on physiological grounds elder girls are kept away'.[7] The greater incidence of head infestation for girls with consequent loss of attendance mark while at the cleansing centres is another possible factor, considered in Section ii of this chapter.

The close relation between health and attendance was made explicit in the same report of 1916. 'The work of the School Medical Service has emphasised the fact that the problem of school attendance is in the main a

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5 Report *op.cit.*, 553.

6 'Nursery Schools : A Retrospect' Times Educational Supplement 6 September 1917, 310.

7 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1916 [Cd.8746] 1917, para.12, 6-7.

medical problem. This was not originally the case but the efficient working of the School Attendance Department in association with other factors, has in large measure eliminated those causes of absence from school which formerly operated'.[8] The need for a proper balance to be kept between insistence on high attendance levels and genuine absence for medical reasons was officially recognised in 1911 when the LCC abolished the long-standing custom of awarding medals for 'perfect' attendance records. The Education Committee considered it had no option in view of the number of 'hard cases' where children with excellent records lost their medals when ordered not to attend school on medical grounds.[9] Two years previously, Margaret Loane, district nurse and writer on working-class family life, had bitterly attacked the medals system as leading to sick children insisting on going to school. For the same reason she criticised press reports extolling 'record attendance'.[10]

The strict policy of the London Authority in relation to attendance up to the fourteenth birthday was modified for a relatively small number of children by the Labour Certificate or by special exemption. The Certificate examination was taken following application by the parent for children either between 12 and 13 or between 13 and 14, the purpose being to ensure a minimum educational standard. At the earlier age there was a mere trickle of leavers ranging from a yearly maximum of 137 to a minimum of 88 between 1912 and 1918. For the older group, figures were a good deal higher with, for example, 546 for 1914-15 and 1,175 for the following year.[11] There is no breakdown of these figures as between girls and boys but an interesting comment on Labour Certificates in an unidentified urban district in the suburbs of London occurs in a Board of Education publication for 1918. This reported on an HMI inquiry into (a) the working of the system of Labour Certificates and (b) the employment

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8 Annual Report *op.cit.*, para.11, 6.

9 Report of 23 July 1919 *op.cit.*, 553.

10 M. Loane, An Englishman's Castle (London 1909) 144-45.

11 Minutes *op.cit.*, Report of the Accommodation and Attendance sub-Committee, 29 January 1919, 3-5.

of children still at elementary school. The latter almost entirely concerned boys' employment but the former made specific reference to girls. Some typical statements were quoted from head teachers who had co-operated closely with the inquiry : 'They are frequently girls from badly managed homes, irregular attenders', 'The girls are certainly below the average. Clever girls have a great desire to remain at school and often overcome any desire by their parents to remove them'. The report commented that contrary opinions from a small minority of head teachers came from schools 'where the social environment is fairly good'.[12] The Labour Certificate test was a genuine one, with a high proprtion of failures in some schools.

Applications for special exemption from attendance, made to the Education Committee of the LCC on urgent personal grounds, were generally granted to children already in their fourteenth year. The numbers were very small with, for example, a total of 49 in 1913-1914, rising to 239 in 1916-1917 and falling to 179 by 1917-1918. Up to 1910 the Minutes of the Education Committee gave brief case histories and these revealed the circumstances considered to warrant the concession. For example :

> *5.11.07* Hampstead. Louisa Horton aged 13.8. Attendance 86/100. Father, a painter, out of work for six weeks. Mother, an ironer, earns ten shillings a week. No children over school age but six under 14. Rent seven shillings and sixpence. Girl required at home to look after young children while mother goes out to work. At present mother has to pay two shillings and fourpence per week for the care of two children at a crèche. If excused the child will attend evening classes.
>
> *8.4.08* Rotherhithe. Martha Taylor aged 13.7. Attendance 184/276. At present working in Standard VI. Absences caused by severe illness of the mother. The father is a casual waterside labourer -

12 Board of Education, Memorandum of the Results of an Inquiry made by Inspectors of the Board of Education in an Urban District in the suburbs of London into (a) the working of the system of Labour Certificates and (b) the employment of children who are in attendance at public elementary schools January 1918, Section I 'The Types of Children who enter for the Examination'.

average weekly wage of fifteen shillings. The mother who was recently in an asylum is now very ill. There are two children over school age, both boys, at present out of work and also six children under 14. Rent seven shillings. Girl required at home to assist her mother with the young children and will, if excused, attend evening classes.

9.2.10 Marylebone East. Marion Jordan aged 13.6. An orphan who lived with her aunt now dead. As the girl has no home nor relations she is at present with her elder sister who is in domestic service. If excused she will be engaged by her sister's employer as a domestic servant. Otherwise must go to the workhouse. Employer 'a gentleman of good position'.[13]

The frequent coda 'will attend evening classes' has a hollow ring, as the headmistresses who endorsed the applications were probably aware. The report of 1909 on attendance at continuation classes makes mention of girl attenders as 'wretchedly tired' but does not draw attention to this particular, numerically small, group.[14]

The log books for girls' departments demonstrate the constant watchfulness of heads on attendance levels, with the managers' inspection of registers as a regular entry and a few references to careless or inadequate register keeping. Heads' strategies for improving and maintaining attendance and punctuality show a predictable mixture of coercion and persuasion. Some girls' schools used the cane on defaulters especially when a note was not forthcoming but, more positively, close attention in poor areas was paid to the problem of boots, lack of which was a serious factor in low attendance, especially in wartime when repairs were hard to come by. Comments from heads on percentage levels give a rough idea of standards expected. Thus during the war the Head at Flora Gardens School considered 85 per cent 'shocking', 91 'average' and 92-93 'good'.

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13 Minutes *op.cit.*, 4 December 1907, 3895; 19 March 1908, 1320; 9 February 1910, 216. While after 1910 no more such case histories were reported, reference was made from time to time to a number of children under fourteen years of age allowed 'for various reasons' to discontinue school attendance.

14 Report of Consultative Committee on Attendance (compulsory or otherwise) at Continuation Schools. Vol.1 Report and Appendices [Cd.4757] 1909. Section F: Evidence of Women Witnesses, 583-596.

The highest achieved was 95 per cent. This school was in an area little affected by bombing and it was the influenza epidemic that reduced numbers to 60 per cent during 1918[15]. At White Lion Street School in a poor area of Islington a new Head, writing in 1914, considered 84 per cent as 'poor'. Punctuality was 'almost a negligible quality' and parents frequently evaded the attendance law. This was part of a generally unsatisfactory school situation, with rude, noisy and defiant behaviour by girls resulting in 'constant friction'. She rapidly instituted 'Punctuality Banners' for classes, thus putting peer group pressure on defaulters, and these were linked to 'Shields of Honour' for improved cleanliness. At the time of her appointment in 1914 an LCC inspector's report urged more Open Days to involve parents and some 16 months later a group of entries began showing a growing attendance of parents at such occasions from 60 in February 1916 to 130 in March 1918.[16]

Examples of concerts, Open Days, exhibitions and other functions to involve parents and tackle low attendance recur throughout the log books, some showing a high level of parental response, and the London Authority won commendation for this policy from Edith Sellers in her article of 1918 on 'The Elementary Schoolchild's Mother'. In the censorious fashion of her other articles she drew attention to a deplorable attitude she had found among mothers of 'semi-hostile indifference' to education, responsible in its most extreme form for the view that teachers should be grateful to mothers for allowing their children to come to school. Sellers described this as applying particularly to girls and as an exclusively English attitude, not found in other parts of the British Isles, nor even in some impoverished European communities she had visited, where education was looked on as a privilege. In her view, only a small minority of mothers were active physical protesters ready to force their way into school to express disapproval, and more damaging was the large number 'too respectable or

15 GLRO EO/DIV1/FLO/LB/1.

16 GLRO EO/DIV3/WHI/LB/6. Extracts from 'Miscellaneous' section.

too wary' to protest directly but who spread a sulky, disgruntled attitude towards school in the neighbourhood. Most serious was the absence of an active public opinion in favour of education so that non-compliant mothers were able to escape any kind of local censure.[17] The London log books refer from time to time to angry incursions into school by mothers, and these were clearly distressing occasions. Heads often referred to drink as being responsible, though this may sometimes have been a way of distancing themselves from the disturbing anger exhibited.[18]

Dr Rubinstein, in his observation quoted above that London parents had become more reconciled to compulsory attendance, does not address the question of whether this acceptance operated equally on mothers in relation to daughters. Where daughters were concerned headmistresses and over-burdened mothers faced a genuine clash of interests. This could be masked by mothers' reluctant acquiescence in face of a legal obligation too powerful to be attacked, or softened by some headmistresses' tireless attempts to harmonise the situation, as for example at Devons Road School, one of 'special difficulty'. An HMI report in 1909 referred to the Head's work for pupils outside school hours, during which time she 'directs a Settlement, at which she lives in a street adjoining the school and devotes herself to the task of alleviating their hard lot, caring for their wants, encouraging and helping their parents to give them a chance in life'. She had, moreover, established a school clinic at the Settlement, attended by a trained nurse.[19] Nevertheless, the conflict of interests remained when some daughters badly needed at home were forced by law to attend school. Three elements in the situation may be discerned.

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17 E. Sellers, 'The Elementary Schoolchild's Mother' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.83, 1918, 553-566. For Sellers's other articles in wartime and for her authority see Chapter I i *supra* n.76.

18 Such incidents do not, of course, include incursions into school during air raid alarms by distracted parents, referred to in Chapter II iii *infra*. There was much controversy among those in authority as to how far drunkenness had increased among mothers in wartime. A spirited defence of mothers against such charges was made by Anna Martin in two articles on 'Working Women and Drink' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.78, December 1915, 1378-1395, and Vol.79, January 1916, 85-104.

19 GLRO EO/DIV5/DEV/LB/1.

There was, first, the attempt through domestic studies classes to fit girls for existing and future home duties. The manner in which this was undertaken in London is discussed in Chapter III i *infra*. There is some evidence that mothers were not impressed by these efforts and criticism was not lacking from interested observers that all too often lessons bore little relation to the girls' home circumstances. The log books moreover reveal the frequency with which girls were sent back to school from the domestic subjects' centres because of teacher absence, a fact likely to have been retailed at home. Attempts by schools to domesticate daughters all in all probably played little part in reconciling mothers to compulsory attendance for older girls. Secondly, interference with the help a daughter could give could strike directly at a mother's capacity for part-time earning and thence for the survival of the family unit. Many schoolgirls certainly worked out of school hours as did their brothers, but their capacity for earning by such work was very much more limited than that of boys. What many mothers needed was their presence. This was particularly true of some districts of London where a variety of part-time work was available to a mother able to leave the home. An article in National Health on mothers' work in Finsbury described the commonest occupations as 'office-cleaning, machining, book-folding, charing, street-hawking, ironing, working as a laundry-hand, making cardboard boxes, paper bags or artificial flowers'. Some mothers took on several jobs, one quoted as selling flowers in the market in the morning, making wreaths in the afternoon and selling newspapers in the evening.[20] The need for their earnings was underlined in a subsequent article in the series which referred to many fathers in the area as being in casual employment and some giving their wives, with four or five children 'the same wretched pittance as they did when they were first married and had no children to support'.[21] In relation to mothers' employment the law on compulsory attendance imposed uniformity on a frequently desperate diversity. A third element in this conflict of interest lay in the schools' frequent and understandable

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20 "MOH", 'Slum Life in Finsbury' in National Health No.91, NS.52, April 1917, 181.
21 *Ibid.*, *Idem.*, May 1917, 222.

attempts to enlist the child's pride in attendance-keeping and to involve the peer group as well as the individual child; as an inspector reported from a Bethnal Green school in 1906 'The girls take a pride in maintaining a high record for punctuality and regularity of attendance'.[22]

ii Health and Cleanliness

The link between compulsory attendance and child health has been indicated above, but the establishment of the School Medical Inspection service in 1907 introduced into the complex relations between school and home new elements of anxiety and of shame - anxiety for mothers as to how and where to procure treatment for illnesses diagnosed, and shame over exposure of body and hair vermin and infestation to the rigorous attentions of the school nurse. The 1913 Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education noted the steady tendency over twenty years for central and local education authorities to extend their duties to cover the whole of child life, physical, mental and moral.[23] In seeking to illustrate and analyse relations between school and home the operation of the school medical service must have a central place. School lessons, even those in domestic studies and mothercraft did not necessarily impinge much on a child's home life. But the findings of a medical examination conducted at school; the insistence on parental responsibility for ensuring treatment; the direct involvement of care committee visitor and/or school nurse in the 'follow-up' procedure; the threat of compulsory action at the cleansing centre, involving such matters as cutting of hair and fumigation of clothes; the link, already mentioned, with school attendance as claims of absence through illness were investigated, were all matters that beat a path

22 HMI report June 1906 on The Lawrence School, S.W. Bethnal Green GLRO EO/DIV5/LAW/LB/2.

23 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1913 [Cd.7730] 1914, 24.

straight to the home, that is in the vast majority of cases to the mother. The link with the home was one of the matters stressed in the 1917 report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education, which included a ten year survey of the service.

> It is wise of the State to deal with the health of the school child but that action cannot yield its true value until the State also deals with the child before it comes to school, with the mother who produces the child, with the conditions which affect the mother and with the after-school life and employment of the adolescent. It is "The House that Jack Built". Even in carrying out the treatment of a child found defective or ailing at school continuity and interdependence have been found to be the governing forces. Here is an unclean child to be cleansed by the Authority, *but it returns clean to a verminous house*. Here is a child provided with spectacles, but it continues to be taught to read small text type in a badly lighted classroom. Here is a scheme for providing school meals, but the arrangements bear no relation to the food supply of the home of the child or of the social condition in which the child lives. Here are a group of children excluded from school because they are suffering from measles, but they play all day with other children, untended, unisolated and untreated. Such illustrations of our imperfect system are manifold.[24]

The series of Annual Reports from before, during and after the war testify to the great seriousness with which the new service was undertaken, giving details of initiatives in research and treatment pioneered by school medical officers, of pressure on dilatory authorities[25] and, after 1914, of the expedients resorted to to keep the work going even in an attenuated form, during the war. As the extract from the 1917 report quoted above suggests, the authorities' major problem was to secure treatment for the conditions revealed by inspection. Some of the opposition to the establishment of the service arose from an obsessive fear that parental sense of responsibility would be undermined, and much emphasis was placed on the ensuring of treatment being their affair. Three

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24 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1917 [Cd.9206] 1918, Section XI 'Ten Year Survey of the School Medical Service', 173.

25 *Idem.* 1910 [Cd.5925] 1911, Section 1.7. The grave shortcomings found in London in 1909 over the number of children inspected are referred to and also the steps taken to remedy this.

major difficulties were identified in the Annual Report for 1909 : (i) how to ensure adequate treatment when some medical practitioners were unable to cope with many of the commonest defects and conditions; (ii) how to arrange treatment for the really poor, deterred by the stigma of pauperism from seeking help from the Guardians; and (iii) how to deal with those categorised as 'irresponsible and indifferent' parents in cases where persistant 'follow-up' might be needed involving care committee, school nurse and even intervention by the NSPCC.[26] Shortage of care committee workers during the war was to intensify these problems as they urged parents 'to obtain treatment from private doctors, hospitals, medical treatment centres or the Poor Law'.[27] To work at its best the organisation needed maximum co-operation with parents, but behind persuasion lay the threat of coercion, and the schools could be caught up in the difficulties and friction of this dual approach.

The school was not simply used by the medical service as a convenient centre for collecting children for inspection. Its functions as educator and pioneer of moral standards were deeply involved, and the dictum 'a child habitually verminous is an uneducated child' was meant to be no empty platitude.[28] In the words of a post-war report on London schools 'The whole moral atmosphere of the school should make it impossible for a child to attend unashamed in a filthy condition'.[29] Activities such as promotion of hygiene lessons, of swimming and physical exercise, the establishment of clothing and boot clubs and the sending of clothing parcels from better-off schools to those in the poorest areas, as well as the strictures in inspectors' reports on ill-lit classrooms and inadequate play space testify to the continuous concern over the findings of medical examinations. These examinations punctuated school life - on entry, at eight years old and on

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26 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education 1909 [Cd.5426] 1910, 96-97.

27 GLRO EO/WEL/1/2 Report on wartime strains on Care Committee work 6 July 1915.

28 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education 1915 [Cd.8338] 1916, 30.

29 *Idem.*, 1920 [Cmd.1522] 1921 Report from Dr Hamer on 'Uncleanliness in London Schools'.

leaving. In London, health and cleanliness examinations were also held for those successful in the Junior County Scholarship examinations. Six girls in 1913 had their scholarships withdrawn on health grounds, four of them 'for want of cleanliness'.[30] The London authority was among those who made a point of additional cleanliness checks held without warning to prevent children arriving at school 'well-washed and brightened up for the occasion'. School medical authorities also kept in touch with factory surgeons who had the power to keep out girls seeking factory or workshop employment if they were found to have 'dirty heads'. This was spoken of in one report as a 'powerful lever ... In many instances (these) refractory parents have given way when they found that their children might not be able to earn wages until their physical defects, discovered years before at school and always deferred treatment, were removed'.[31]

The active co-operation of teachers was much depended on, among other things in helping to encourage the presence of parents at medical inspection. In this they had some success. Figures for 1911 give average percentages of parents or guardians attending as 40.2 per cent for counties, 56.7 for county boroughs, 40.4 for municipal boroughs, 55.4 for urban districts, and London heading the list with 62 per cent. The wilfully negligent and neglectful mothers form an extremely small part of the community' the 1911 Report commented, adding that 'slackness' in attendance was often simply failure of opportunity.[32]

Apart from hair and body infestation, the commonest health complaints revealed by inspection concerned eyes, ears, nose, throat and teeth as well as skin conditions, ringworm being the most prevalent. Local Authorities had power under the 1907 Act to set up school clinics, and the LCC opened

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30 Annual Report *op.cit.*, 1913 [Cd.7730] 1914 Report from Dr Hamer on 'The Examination of Leavers and its relation to after life', 270.

31 GLRO EO/WEL/1/19 Report from the Schools Medical Officer (Dr. W. H. Hamer) 22 March 1918.

32 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1911 [Cd.6530] 1912-1914, Section 14, 96-98.

23 between 1910 and 1913 with another 23 in operation by 1919. Of these 41 were for the treatment of all or some of the conditions noted above. The clinics were an obvious advantage to hard-pressed mothers for whom hospital attendance, with the journey and waiting involved and the fear of the school attendance officer if an older child were kept back to look after things at home, could create a desperate dilemma. Not surprisingly local pressure on education authorities for the setting up of clinics was a constant theme in the records of the Women's Co-operative Guild.[33]

The treatment of hair and body dirt and infestation was the area of health work most likely to involve friction between school and home. As far as hair was concerned this was predominantly a girls' problem. Not that cleanliness for boys was taken lightly[34] but a stronger moral element was involved for girls quite apart from the problem of their long hair. Neglect of personal hygiene was seen as a reflection on their feminine qualities and their position as the mothers of the future generation, while the repair of the pinned-up dress and the undarned stocking was a girl's personal responsibility.[35] As for the presence of nits (lice eggs) in the hair, some London figures from 1911 illustrate the disparity of the problem as between girls and boys[36]:

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33 The Co-operative News 'Women's Corner' weekly column. Local campaigns on this and other issues related to child and family welfare, such as maternity services, were reported.

34 See, for example, 'Memorandum' from Mr E. G. Hardy formerly of Westminster Bridge Road School, quoted in Annual Report of the L.C.C. 1910 'Scores of times I have stood over 100-120 boys and have waited to see each one thoroughly washed before allowing him to commence work'.

35 See discussion on 'Teaching in Public Elementary Schools of Personal Hygiene, Food Values, Domestic Catering and Cookery' in C. E. Hecht (ed.), Rearing an Imperial Race (London, 1913) 133-155, and E. Sellers, 'An Antediluvian on Education of Working-class Girls', The Ninteenth Century and After Vol.80, July-December 1916, 337-349.

36 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for 1911 *op.cit.* Report on London Organisation, 34.

	No. of children examined	No. clean	1st notice served	Final warning	No. proposed by nurse for exclusion	No. excluded for prosecution	No. prosecuted
B.	873	852	21	8	3	3	-
G.	45,119	37,326	7,493	4,921	3,809	2,689	257

For verminous bodies and clothes the figures showed little to choose between the sexes with slightly better results for girls. Out of 89,534 boys and 89,989 girls examined in London in 1914, 23,679 boys and 22,136 girls were classified as 'dirty', with lice present on 1,725 and 1,351 respectively.[37] Similar comparisons from other years show much the same proportions.

A frequent complaint from the health authorities was the acceptance of nits in the hair by some parents as a fact of life and a consequent absence of what were considered to be proper feelings of shame and also the distressing presence of improper resentment :

> For many years past there has been an unwillingness on the part of many people even to countenance reference to the subject and certainly to face the obvious facts, with the resulting disposition on the part of parents of the poorest children either to accept infestation as inevitable, or at any rate to ignore and even resent the proffer of facilities provided by the Council. The findings of the doctor or of the nurse were again and again called in question, the advice given was not welcomed and when the procedure sanctioned by law was invoked the demonstration of nits was looked upon in the light of an insult, the cutting of hair necessary in neglected cases, was resisted as a violation of the liberty of the subject and the Council's nurses were not infrequently subjected to actual ill-treatment'.[38]

It was officially recognised that cleanliness inspections were bound to be unpopular with children and with parents and that in consequence the school nurse must be an authoritative figure. However, at the centre of the

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37 Annual Report *op.cit.*, for 1914 [Cd.8055] 1914-1916 'Uncleanliness' Figures for London, 59.

38 *Idem.* for 1918 [Cmd.420] 1919 'The Treatment of Special Conditions', 74.

tension that existed over cleansing stood the headmistress. On the one hand, even more than the health authorities, she and her staff stood to lose through any ill-feeling and lack of co-operation with parents. On the other, they were under constant pressure from inspectors to promote and encourage cleanliness and related virtues among the girls and their efforts to do this were commended in inspectors' reports. Thus the LCC District Inspector commented, in 1915, on a girls' school in a poor area of Bethnal Green

> The work of the girls' department is sound and great care is taken. The clean and tidy appearance of the girls and the attention paid to their personal hygiene are quite distinctive features which, especially considering the poverty of the surroundings, deserve commendation.[39]

and in East Finsbury in July 1915

> This school is situated in a very poor neighbourhood and it is pleasing to note that the children on the whole are cleaner than in former years. There is no doubt the adjacent cleansing centre together with the work of the nurses and doctors has had a very marked and wholesome effect on the parents and homes of the district.[40]

In the London log books available for girls' departments the visits of the nurse to the schools are meticulously recorded, their frequency being an index to the poverty of the district. There are scattered references to angry parents coming to school to complain about their daughters' treatment at the cleansing centre, or to children running away when sent there, but rarely any so outspoken as those in the Log Book for Randall Place School for 21 October 1915 and 24 July 1916. On the earlier date, which coincided with a period of Zeppelin raids, the headmistress wrote

> Many parents came up to school greatly enraged at receiving cards telling them to take their girls to the cleansing station. The parents

39 LCC District Inspector's Report 12 June 1915, Cranbrook Road School GLRO EO/DIV5/CRA/LB/8

40 *Idem.*, 23 July 1915 Central Street School GLRO EO/DIV3/CEN/LB/5.

> were advised to go with the children and two children returned to say that the cleansing station nurse said they should never have been sent. It seems very unwise of the LCC nurse to upset these people who are already thoroughly overwrought by happenings connected with the "Great War".

and in 1916

> Visit of Nurse L...* from cleansing station. This nurse has a particularly aggressive manner towards parents and children. She has upset so many that the scenes in school have been quite painful. The attendance has been affected considerably by her visit.

It should be noted that this second incident was followed next day by a visit from the superintendent of nurses 'to express regret'.[41] Evidence from some of the cleansing centres supplements that from log books. A report from the Central Care sub-Committee of the LCC on the cleansing of verminous children praises the care and devotion of nurses and stresses their good relations with the children, while deploring the re-infection from siblings and bedding at home, but a letter in the same file raises another point of contention with the homes. The mother of Winnie C...* writes attacking the nurse for cutting the child's hair 'What do you think we are? Germans that you can do what you like with?'[42] A legal problem over hair cutting lay in the wording of the 1907 Act that 'suitable appliances' were allowed for cleansing. A magistrate had ruled in 1911 that this phrase included scissors and that the Council had power to cut hair without parental consent, after warning procedures had been followed.[43]

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41 Extract from 'Miscellaneous' section of Log Book for Randall Place School GLRO EO/DIV6/RAN/LB/7.

42 GLRO PH/SHS/3/10 Report from the Children's Care sub-Committee 5 February 1915, and other documents in this file. Both here and in the preceding extract * names are indicated by initials as this material is still within living memory.

43 Before compulsory treatment, the 'responsible parent' had to be notified personally. As this was officially the father there was often difficulty in finding him at home and treatment could be delayed in consequence.

During the war the cleanliness issue involved schools in another manner. Board of Education Circular 880 in 1914 dealt with circumstances in which army separation allowances and allotments of pay could be cut off from women 'who are guilty of serious misconduct; e.g. causes of immorality definitely established, conviction on criminal charges, gross neglect of children, or persistant drinking especially where such drinking results in the neglect of children'. Local Education Authorities through managers, teachers and attendance officers should 'keep an eye on the children in charge of persons drawing Army Separation Allowances during the present war and report to the War Office any cases of neglect which in their opinion call for notice'. Allowances for children would not be affected but might be transferred 'to some person of trust'. The police were to be involved and the education authority might conveniently in the first instance communicate with the Chief Constable.[44]

The return home on leave of men from the trenches was remarked on in 1916 as exacerbating the problem of vermin in London homes as soldiers went straight home from troop trains causing much re-infestation.[45] However in the following years, 1917-1918, men's sufferings from body vermin were seen by the authorities as having a positive effect on family attitudes, promoting greater willingness to act on advice.[46] For whatever reasons, by 1921 the Schools Medical Officer for London could report that body vermin in children attending school had been reduced 'almost to vanishing proportions', though 'the state of hair in girl scholars is still a cause of some concern - in 20.5 per cent of cases examined as compared with 18.9 in 1920 and 22.6 in 1919'. The report for 1919 refers to a new method for removing nits without injury to the hair. It had been developed by the Council's chemists, together with the use of a special

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44 Board of Education Circular 880 'Cessation of Army Separation Allowances and of Allotments of Pay to the Unworthy', November 1914.

45 GLRO PH/SHS/3/18 Report of the Schools Medical Officer for London on the effect on school children of the return of soldiers from the Front.

46 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1918 [Cmd.420] 1919. Report from Dr Hamer on uncleanliness in London schools, 74.

comb brought to the authorities' notice by an Islington hairdresser. 'This is leading to a more friendly attitude on the part of the parents and marks a notable achievement in the campaign against the common louse'.[47] This suggests that both school and health authorities were genuinely anxious to avoid friction with parents, regarding co-operation as important, though always having to take second place to law enforcement.

The School Medical Service took shape at a time when much work and propaganda, largely voluntary and charitable in origin but with some official backing, was being undertaken to lower the rate of infant mortality. This was accompanied by a widespread tendency to blame the home and in particular the mother for the high level of infant deaths rather than to seek reasons in environmental factors outside her control, or more simply in family poverty.[48] The question arises of how far, in relation to children's health, cleanliness and nutrition, there was a similar tendency to blame mothers particularly those who worked outside the home. Was there any genuine attempt on the part of officials, teachers and others to comprehend the problems of families who had to meet the demands of the new services? There are to be found in the LCC Medical Officer's reports some examples of insight into the difficulties of families in a particular district. Thus a survey in 1910 of school children in North Kensington revealed some of the consequences of male unemployment and of the underpayment of female labour. In the senior department of one school

> 144 children were being supported by their mothers only, 57 were living upon their sisters, 68 upon the joint earnings of elder brothers and sisters, while another 130 had mothers who went out to work to supplement the earnings of the father. Approximately one third of the children in this neighbourhood are supported by female labour ... The maintenance of the home, the cooking and catering is done by an elder girl who sometimes may not be more than ten years of age. The mother's earnings provide bread and tea for the family and pay the rent but leave nothing over for clothing or boots.

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47 Annual Report *op.cit.*, for 1919 [Cmd.995] 1920 'Report on Character and Degree of Defect in London Children', 65.

48 C. Dyhouse, 'Working-class Mothers' Journal of Social History No.2 Winter 1978, 248-266. and Chapter III ii *infra*.

The Report continued with a contrast between boys and girls in this situation.

> Many of the boys obtain employment out of school hours for which they are paid and for which they receive food; others learn to hang about the gasworks and similar places and get scraps of food and halfpence from the workmen. In consequence they may appear to be better nourished than the girls who work beyond their strength at domestic work, step-cleaning, baby-minding or carrying laundry bundles and running errands. For this labour they receive no remuneration since it is done for the family. It is not uncommon to find girls of ten doing a hard day's work outside their schoolwork.[49]

Further indications of opinion before the war came from the major conference of the Food Reform Association held in London in 1912, and attended by school medical officers, teachers and others involved in social work.[50] One experienced London headmistress, while totally upholding the role of the school in hygiene and health work, gave her opinion that in hygiene classes '...the children have learnt the lessons they have been taught, but have learnt them for the benefit of the teacher or inspector. Further than that they have not gone. There is no personal application at all.' She went on to plead that impossibly high standards should not be set, such as expecting children to clean their teeth after every meal. Another London teacher asked how the required standard of cleanliness could be reached in homes such as she knew in St. Pancras where every drop of water had to be carried up and down three flights of stairs. By contrast the 'hardline' attitude at the conference was represented by, among others, W. A. Nicholls a former NUT president, who stated with satisfaction that when dealing with verminous children bedding could now be taken out into the street and destroyed. The mixture of reaction from teachers was not surprising. Some certainly had close and sympathetic knowledge of the housing conditions of some pupils, but in crowded classrooms had an obvious personal interest in seeing that cases of infection and infestation

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49 Annual Report of the L.C.C. 1910 Report of the Education Committee submitting the Annual Report of the Medical Officer (Education) for the year 1910. Survey of Children in North Kensington, 129-30.

50 C. E. Hecht (ed.), *op.cit.* See Chapter 1 i n.70 *supra.*

did not go untreated, quite apart from the pressure from the inspectorate mentioned above.[51]

In an article incorporated into the conference report[52], George Rainey, a social worker in East London, compared attitudes to school feeding in London and Paris. Rainey was deeply involved in care committee work and was opposed to the outlook and methods of the Charity Organisation Society which was influential on these committees. Referring to a letter from the COS in The Spectator for February 1912 which criticised school feeding, he pointed out that feeding in Paris was carried out to an extent 'which would horrify the average London care committee' and continued

> In London the teachers cannot be expected to make bricks without straw and have little to encourage them. It is of little use calling for handkerchiefs or inspecting linen and boots if the child has neither and there is no source capable of supplying the deficiency. It may be that the total amount of clothing given away by the various agencies is proportionate to that supplied by the municipalities in Paris, but if so, our methods render the results absurdly disproportionate. In this country there is a school of thought whose fear of undermining parental responsibility or of pauperizing amounts almost to an obsession. How many of these moralists know what it means to rise from a meal hungry because they have shared the last crumb with their children ? Many of them might learn a lesson in self-denial and parental responsibility from those they term 'unsatisfactory' parents.[53]

The concept of parental responsibility could be used in a censorious fashion to justify the most rigorous care committee inquisition into, for example, a particular family's need for free dinners. In such circumstances, the reactions of mothers to school meals as well as to other forms of state and local authority control were by no means simple and

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51 For example in the Log Book for Boundary Lane School (GLRO EO/DIV7/BOW/LB/2) a pupil who had truanted instead of attending a treatment centre for a suppurating ear was mentioned. The child's ear had become so offensive that 'today the Headmistress smelt it as she marched past the desk'.

52 C. E. Hecht (ed.), *op.cit.*

53 G. Rainey, 'Necessitous Children in Paris and London' in Hecht (ed.), *ibid.*, 410-424.

uniform and have been the subject of some recent research. Ellen Ross and Jane Lewis from different standpoints explore the interaction between working-class families and the various agencies bent on social reform. Ross's study of women's family and neighbourhood relations in close-knit London communities before the war includes examination of the difference between husband and wife neighbourhood networks and of the complex strategies by which wives kept a family together through the most difficult periods, revealing just how wide a gap in understanding there could be between those administering social reform legislation and the recipients.[54] Lewis is specifically concerned with the reactions of working-class wives and mothers to state control and intervention.[55] She considers that social policies were formulated deliberately to encourage the male breadwinner/dependent wife form of family 'with the assumption that this form was the "correct" one and must therefore be presumed to exist amongst the working class.' While this assumption did of course frequently distort reality, as the North Kensington example given above bears witness, none the less Lewis considers that 'working-class wives accepted in large measure the primacy of their responsibilities to home and children and the secondary nature of any wage-earning they might engage in.' Given this argument

> I will suggest that there was the possibility of resistance and resentment on the part of working-class wives whenever state policy threatened either their management of the fragile family economy or their domestic authority. For the most part such a situation arose as a result of the state's increasing pre-occupation with the health and welfare of children...[56]

an area, as we have seen, in which the school was deeply involved.

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54 E. Ross, 'Survival Networks. Women's Neighbourhood Sharing in London before World War One' and 'Labour and Love. Rediscovering London's Working-class Mothers' *ops.cit.*, Chapter I i n.17.

55 J. Lewis, 'The Working-class Mother and State Intervention 1870-1918' in Lewis (ed.), *op.cit.*, Chapter I i *supra* n.16.

56 *Ibid.*, 103.

Brian Harrison has noted that 'early 20th century feminists were becoming increasingly preoccupied with the plight of the overburdened housewife and mother'[57] and this involved dealing realistically with the economic position of the wife within the family when considering the 'fragile family economy' as a whole. In examining relations between school and home in this area, two feminists are particularly relevant. Taking them out of chronological order for the moment these are Eleanor Rathbone and Anna Martin. In her book stating fully the case for family endowment, Rathbone summed up the dilemma in which many mothers were caught.

> Popular sentiment from the Old Testament downwards has never failed to pay its tribute to the devotion of mothers, but only a few women observers ... have called attention to the steadily increasing strain on their resources and endurance caused by the rising standards of educational and social requirements. Compulsory education, prohibition of wage earning by school children, abolition of half-time, restriction on home work which tends to drive it into the factory, have reduced the wife's chances of supplementing what her husband 'turns up' by her own or the children's earnings. Through medical inspection at school, the visits of a health visitor when a baby is born, her own attendance at a child welfare centre, her attention is continually being drawn to some fresh requirement ... involving on her part more labour ... and demanding better utensils and materials than she has the money to buy.

She pointed out the mother's quandary - equally likely to be blamed and punished if she failed to take a child to hospital, left a baby alone in the home meanwhile, or kept an older child from school to look after it.[58]

Anna Martin's involvement in social work in the Rotherhithe district of Bermondsey has been referred to in Chapter I *supra*, and her powerful series of articles between 1910 and 1919 listed.[59] Amid her detailed defence of mothers against charges of waste and extravagance, ignorance, drunkenness and general incompetence, she raised the matter of relations

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57 B. Harrison, 'Women's Health and the Women's Movement in Britain 1840-1940' in C. Webster (ed.), Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940 (Cambridge 1981) 63.

58 E. Rathbone, The Disinherited Family (London 1924) 69-70.

59 Her articles in The Nineteenth Century and After are listed in Chapter I I *supra*, n.78.

between school and home on several occasions. She referred to teachers 'being driven from behind' so that clean and tidy children must be presented to the inspectors or teachers suffer in their reports. She continued

> So powerful and remorseless is the pressure they apply that even in the poorest schools only a small percentage of the scholars show serious defects of clothing or ... failure as regards personal cleanliness. The fact is to the superficial observer a welcome proof of the improved social condition of the masses. The mothers only too often know better, and puzzled school doctors report that it is too frequently the neglected (sic) children who are the best nourished and have the best teeth.'[60]

One of Martin's recurrent themes in her articles was the arrogance of the authorities, including the schools, in assuming their knowledge of the child's needs to be greater than that of the mother who saw these needs in the light of the whole family situation. Martin pointed out the extent to which fathers did not accept financial responsibility for growing family expenditure including that demanded by school and medical services. As a result the wife could be forced into desperate expedients often simply not comprehended by the education authorities. She wrote

> It is almost impossible to convey to readers whose social concepts have been formed in an environment in which the male head of the family carries as a matter of course all its financial burdens, how detached from any sense of responsibility for the needs of their homes hundreds of thousands of men have become.[61]

Provision of school meals could raise other difficulties between home and school. Even though the usefulness of the service could not be gainsaid, Martin found mothers concerned at any eroding of their authority as the family's provider of physical needs, some of them dreading lest application for meals might lead to husbands docking the meagre allowance of housekeeping money, and weaken the link between

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60 A. Martin, 'The Irresponsibility of the Father' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.84, 1095-6.

61 A. Martin, *idem.*, The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.79, 102.

breadwinner and home.[62] The meals service as a point of contact between school and home was of course a different proposition from the medical service. Except in some cases of acute malnutrition when a child might be referred direct to the care committee by doctor or nurse, it was a service applied for, not imposed. In London it was administered by the care committees so that inquisitions into family circumstances were made through them and not through the schools. Nevertheless the link was close and knowledge of family circumstances possessed by teachers, nurses and school attendance officers could be made use of to check parents' applications. The Board of Education wished connection with the schools to be close. In 1914 the Board's new regulations laid down that applications by local authorities for grants for meals would be considered in the light of how far the school link was emphasised, including 'the extent to which attention is given to the educational aspect of the work'. The Board also in Circular 856 considered it 'extremely desirable' that teachers should be associated with the work even though under the Act of 1906 they could not be compelled to take part.[63]

Care committees differed widely in their estimate of need, so that the numbers of children being given meals could vary a good deal, quite apart from the differences in the prosperity of adjoining districts. Some committees kept a hawk-like watch on the free dinner list for any change in family circumstances such as an elder sibling going to work which might make it possible to remove a child from the free meals list. The article in Education quoted above while praising much that was good in the London arrangements remarked that 'the Poor Law aspect of school feeding is too much in evidence; this tends towards feeding only such children as are "necessitous", while the truly educational aspect would be to secure the

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62 Martin, *op.cit.*, Vol.69, 108.

63 The 1914 Regulations and the Board Memorandum published as Circular 856 are discussed in Education Vol.24, 1914, 3-4. The emphasis on the educational aspect is dealt with in an article in the same volume 'The Social and Ethical value of School Feeding' 326-7. The child used to casual and slipshod feeding is to be confronted with 'a properly laid table with a clean cloth, an adequate amount of crockery and perhaps a vase of flowers in the centre' and would 'instinctively ... try to live up to such magnificence.'

feeding of all undernourished children whatever the cause of their malnutrition, and whatever the circumstances of their parents ... [64] In the course of the war changes took place. The immediate surge in the demand for meals in 1914-1915 was reduced as allowances began to be paid more regularly and wages rose, though with many mothers at work the increased number of non-necessitous children paying for meals meant no reduction in the work of a severely attenuated care committee force. It is not possible to strike any valid balance between the usefulness of the meals service to families and their dislike of care committee inquisitions, nor to estimate how far the schools were associated, by families receiving meals, with the advantages or the shortcomings of the service. This must have varied according to whether the meals took place at the school or at some other location, the extent to which teachers were involved, and how far the head teacher took a close interest, as undoubtedly happened in some poorer areas.[65] That the authorities were far from satisfied is recalled by the passage quoted above in the 1917 report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board : 'Here is a scheme for providing school meals, but the arrangements bear no relation to the food supply of the home of the child or to the social condition in which the child lives.'[66]

iii Unofficial contacts in peace and war

Evidence of relations between schools and parents at less formal levels based partly on the log books for girls' departments includes positive initiatives by headmistresses to attract and co-operate particularly with

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64 Education *op.cit.*, 319-320.

65 Anna Martin desribes a talk given by 'an excellent and enthusiastic headmaster' to an audience of mothers, in which he explained that he estimated the number of boys who had had no cooked dinner at home by those who returned to school eating bread and butter. The mothers, too diffident to challenge him, told her afterwards that this was generally given to the boys *after* their cooked meal. The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.68, 1114.

66 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1917 [Cd.9206] 1918 'Ten Year Survey of the School Medical Service' 173.

mothers. Such initiatives mainly took the form of Open Days or school performances to which parents were invited, together with an occasional lecture of interest to mothers. Attendance at Open Days could run up to two hundred, a creditable total for schools with between three and four hundred girls on the roll. How often these took place can only be conjectured given the small proportion of log books surviving and the variation in filling them up. Among the more unusual occasions noted was an exhibition of over seventy garments made by the girls in needlework classes, an occasion when elder girls were allowed home early to escort the infants and leave mothers free to attend a lecture on baby care, and a jumble sale raising £50 'to provide spectacles and various other things for necessitous children and in many ways to ameliorate the drab lives of these interesting children'.[67]

Occasional conflicts with individual mothers were recorded, apart from those already noted over compulsory cleansing and hair cutting, and mainly concerned discipline. Protests over caning, the permitted punishment under the revised LCC Punishment Code of 1913, were not accepted by the school, though one of these is noted as reaching the magistrate's court, but schools had to acknowledge themselves at fault when protests were made at pupils being hit with rulers. The most serious case of this kind recorded in the logs concerned a teacher at a cookery and laundry centre accused of bruising children's arms, boxing ears, pinching and thumping. The incidents took place in 1916-1917 when the shortage of domestic subjects teachers was acute, which may account for the resigned tone of the Head's remarks 'Miss L...*'s methods are undoubtedly very harsh and she is certainly very rude whenever ... advised'.[68]

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67 Reported respectively in the 'Miscellaneous' sections of the Log Books for Drayton Park School (GLRO EO/DIV3/DRA/LB/4), Brandlehow Road School (EO/DIV9/BRA/LB/3) and Snowfields School (EO/DIV8/SNO/LB/2).

68 'Miscellaneous' section of Log Book for Kilburn Lane School (GLRO EO/DIV2/KIL/LB/9) and see n.42 *supra*. Under the 1913 Punishment Code teachers at the Domestic Studies centres could not use the cane.

Air raids on London did on some occasions bring schools and parents more directly and painfully into contact. Towards the end of 1915 Dr Kimmins, Chief Inspector of Schools for the LCC, followed up his initial survey of some 3,000 children's attitudes towards the war[69] with a second on their reactions to air raids. This involved 945 children drawn from schools in areas directly affected by the Zeppelin raids of 8 September and 13 October.[70] About 150 essays resulted from each of the ages between eight and thirteen, describing in a quarter of an hour, without warning or preparation, the children's experiences of the raids. About 550 papers related to the first raid and about 400 to the second. Dr Kimmins analysed these essays according to age and sex, and they form a unique survey of children's reactions. 'Analysis', he wrote, 'was relatively an easier matter as nearly all the children had actual experience of one or both of the raids and the influence of the teacher had not to be eliminated as in the previous investigations'. Unfortunately there was little recorded in the log books on the effects of these 1915 Zeppelin raids apart from a few references to absences and children's sleepless nights, with one single entry giving the flavour of curiosity and excitement that marked some of the children's accounts. During the later and far more damaging raids by aircraft in 1917-1918 the reverse situation obtained. There were a considerable number of references to strain and tension between parents and schools but we are without home-based material from any Kimmins-type survey. There is one reference to Dr Kimmins trying to promote a similar study in 1917 but it does not seem to have been followed up.[71] It is reasonable to assume that he encountered too much resistance from overburdened head teachers to pursue the plan. Problems of staffing, accommodation, stress and fatigue were considerably greater by 1917 than in the first year and a half of the war. Compared with the lively reactions related by children in

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69 Considered in Chapter V *infra*.

70 C. W. Kimmins, 'The Interests of London Children at different ages in Air Raids' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.3, No.4, 4 March 1916, 225-236.

71 'Miscellaneous' section of Log Book for Rosebery Avenue School (GLRO EO/DIV3/ROS/LB/3) 20 July 1917. Dr Kimmins is recorded as visiting and asking for essays on the air raids along the same lines as in 1915.

1915, there were by the time of the later raids frequent references by headmistresses to extremes of fatigue and depression among parents and children.

The Kimmins material for 1915 therefore, while interesting in itself is only tangentially relevant to a study of home-school relations, but in so far as these were the spontaneous voices of London pupils whose power of expression in their essays reflected the teaching they had had, a brief indication of girls' attitudes and some comparative reference to boys are appropriate as providing a rare first-hand view of their reactions. After his full analysis year by year for boys and girls Dr Kimmins summed up in a series of 'General Remarks' :

(1) The girls are throughout more reflective than the boys. They like to comment on the exciting events passing before them, whereas the boys are generally satisfied with descriptions without comment.

(2) The essays of boys and girls of eight years of age deal almost exclusively with local matters in unconnected simple sentences without any indication of the relative importance of events.

(5) The first indications of fear are seen in the essays of girls of nine rising to a maximum at ten years of age, after which they only occur sporadically. In the case of boys expressions of fear are almost exclusively confined to the age of ten.

(6) Girls of nine and eleven and, to a less extent, of ten years of age describe in detail the events of waking and dressing and the care of younger children. Comparatively few references are made to these matters by boys.

(8) At all ages the mothering instinct of the girl is clearly shown, and from eight years onwards the proportion of the description of home affairs tends to increase. With the boy the reverse is clearly seen. Matters of the home interest him less and less from eight to thirteen as compared with the other events of the raid.

(9) Following the period of great fear at the age of ten, the girls give unmistakeable evidence of the bellicose attitude at eleven, followed by a well-marked critical and argumentative phase at twelve years of age.

(11) Girls of twelve who are really nervous but are too proud to show it, are in danger of suffering from the effects of suppressed emotion. The comparatively few cases of this kind recorded are nearly all of girls of this age.

(12) In these essays the evidence of abnormal maturity and broad outlook of the girl of thirteen fully confirms the opinion based on the previous investigation of the interests of children of different ages in the war.'[72]

In the detailed analysis, but not repeated in the general remarks there was the interesting comment on the small part in the children's accounts played by fathers. 'In ninety-five per cent of the papers no references are made to him, and even then the references are not flattering, for example : "My father was very frightened during the raid and ran into a beer shop and got under the counter and stayed there until it was all over."' Kimmins noted that apart from those taking part in the raid such as police, soldiers and firemen, men were rarely referred to and then often in uncomplimentary terms : 'A man came into the public house and said "Give me half a pint. If I'm going to die, I'll die drunk."', 'A gentleman who was with us fainted but we soon brought him round.' Kimmins gives no possible reasons for these attitudes, but it can be assumed that so careful an analyst of the material would have mentioned if large numbers of men in these areas were away on active service.[73]

Very different in tone were the comments, clearly often written in great distress, by the headmistresses in the log books in 1917-1918. It was not

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72 Kimmins, *op.cit.*, 236. The above eight paragraphs taken from his twelve General Remarks are those that refer to girls or which compare reactions of girls and boys. Those referring only to boys are omitted.

73 *Ibid.*, 234.

only the raids themselves but the constant rumours that caused much concern. In her account of the war years C. E. Playne wrote of later 1917

> It was the evening Press which kept up and increased popular nervous excitement about the raids. All the early part of the autumn vivid accounts occurred constantly of raid alarms, raid incidents and adventures, escapes and injuries all dressed up with circumstance and vividness ... no time was wasted in judging the effect of tales on the overwrought minds of many.[74]

Most of the log book entries dealing with the 1917 raids and some in 1918 are marked by the same combination - great sympathy for the children and often for the staff as well, mixed with exasperation towards the parents because of repeated panicking attempts to reach their children during daytime raids or rumours of raids. The worst incidents involving school children were on 13 June 1917, one school in Poplar receiving a direct hit killing eighteen. With rumours of fresh raids on June 14 log after log recorded trouble as parents tried to enter the schools. One Head reported on the excitability of parents 'many of whom are of foreign extraction', with school work made more difficult 'as the noise of disorderly parents in the streets distracted the children's attention'. The same Head noted writing four hundred letters to parents following this occasion.[75] In another school on the same day 'the parents gathered round the school gates (which were locked by order) and appeared very angry because they could not get to their children'.[76] When gates were not locked in time 'sent children home after 3.30 as it was no longer possible to keep parents going beyond the middle of the staircase. Had they entered the rooms a panic might have ensued. Teachers and children are gems, but agonised and sensational men and women add to the strain only known to those who endure it.'[77] The expedient of ordering the school caretakers to lock the gates was frequently referred to. Thus on 13 June itself, from another

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74 C. E. Playne, Britain holds on 1917-1918 (London 1933) 168.

75 Log Book, 'Miscellaneous' section for Dempsey Street School GLRO EO/DIV5/DEM/LB/6.

76 *Idem.*, Hamond Square School GLRO EO/DIV4/HAM/LB/4.

77 *Idem.*, Rotherfield Street School GLRO EO/DIV3/ROT/LB/2.

school 'heavy damage nearby from bombs. Teachers prevented panic. Owing to the excellent management of the caretaker only two parents managed to make their way into the building.'[78] From a Bermondsey school in October 1917 came the observation

> The "air raids" have struck terror into the hearts of our poor children. Many of them spend their nights in the London Bridge Station tube and others under the railway arches. They drop off to sleep during lessons and I have given orders that they must not be disturbed.'[79]

During 1918 children helping parents queue for food and also the influenza epidemic were factors causing further strain and greatly lowered attendance, though few of the dramatic confrontations of the summer and autumn of 1917 were recorded. After a lull in the November and December of 1917 there was a renewal of raids in the early months of 1918.

Apart from the brief indications of parents' Open Days and similar occasions, the contacts dealt with above have mainly involved conflict and disturbance. It is fitting therefore to end this survey by examining the results of an investigation undertaken in 1916 by the London Branch of the Training Colleges Association to discover what some mothers actually thought of the schools. A report of the findings was given at the meeting of the Branch at Stockwell College in March 1916. It first explained how information had been obtained,

> A questionnaire was circulated among those members of the Branch who could get it answered by working-class mothers, and three speakers of very wide and varied experience gave the result of their knowledge to the meeting. The speakers were : Miss Croal (assistant inspectress of boarded-out children LCC); Mrs. Brown, a working woman who lectures and speaks for the Women's Co-operative Guild; and a representative of the WEA, also a working woman. Help was very kindly given by the University Settlement in Bristol where some eight members of the School for Mothers answered the

78 Log Book, 'Miscellaneous' section for Curtain Road School GLRO EO/DIV4/CUR/LB/5.
79 *Idem.*, Snowfields School GLRO EO/DIV8/SNO/LB/2.

> questionnaire ... Only 30 sets of answers were sent in, but the three speakers who came into contact with many mothers during their work gave the meeting the same conclusions as one draws from their answers.

The questions asked included matters of behaviour: Had children become more obedient, tidy, truthful and helpful at home by going to school ?

> It was difficult to get this question answered. But with one exception those who did answer (15) said that the children became more 'manageable' once they went to school but not more mannerly. One said the girls grew more helpful, but though the boys learnt "to mend things" they made such a litter that they were more bother than use.

What did they tell about school life when they came home? Here the answer was that only the little ones said much and mostly about things they had made or games played. Older ones only talked of special things 'like a row or an inspector's visit'. On the question of learning useful things at school

> In spite of adverse criticism the general view was that school was useful because it taught many 'useful things' as cookery and laundry: 'can't grumble at school now' represented many women's view ... All disliked the science : 'Not gone into sufficiently to be of use' said one. About half state definitely what is being taught is not much use in after life - Geometry and Drawing for example. From one *School for Mothers* all said that the children were crammed and there were too many examinations.

According to the Report, all the mothers agreed that children liked school and wearied of holidays. 'Most children are proud of their prowess in Arithmetic and Handwork. Most children think their school is best and 'what teachers says is right'. Mothers were however unanimous that children should not remain longer at school :

> The general opinion is that Standard IV is the hard standard and after that especially the boys grow lazy. The poor parents said they must have the children home at fourteen and would like them at

eleven - or when they passed Standard IV. The better-off said if the school age was to be raised the curriculum must be more practical.

When Miss Croal and Mrs Brown were questioned they confirmed many of these conclusions. They had found that the mothers highly approved of infant schools and noticed how the children improved there; that they thought work in the upper standards of little use and did not whole-heartedly approve even of the manual work; and that they would strongly resent any raising of the school leaving age. The question of the waste of time in the upper standards was clearly a matter of much concern to those presenting the report for 'nearly all of us value greatly the child's last two years at school. There must surely be some reason for the divergence of view apart from the obvious one that parents in many cases left school too early themselves to understand what the modern school is trying to do for the modern child.'[80]

Some more detailed questions and answers from this survey concerning domestic subjects teaching in school are considered in the next chapter, in which the pressures before and during the war to promote domestic studies for girls are explored. Whatever beliefs some mothers may have had on the waste of time in the last years of school there is evidence that some London headmistresses valued this period highly, to the extent of opposing over-emphasis on domestic teaching. This they saw as interfering with general education for their twelve to fourteen year-olds. The attitude of parents also has a bearing on the remarkable but short-lived attempt in 1921-1922 to establish compulsory day continuation schools in London, discussed in Chapter VI.

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80 'The Parental View of the School' Report of an Investigation by the London Branch of the Training Colleges Association. Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.3, No.5, 1916, 339-341.

III Training in School for Womanhood

i Domestic Studies

In the years before, during and after the First World War current policies and attitudes towards the teaching of domestic subjects and infant care in schools aroused a considerable volume of enquiry, discussion and controversy. The influential eugenics lobby was deeply involved, as well as those who spoke for a widely diffused concern, often reflecting social-Darwinist assumptions, over infant mortality rates, malnutrition and other aspects of child ill-health. As previously noted the presumed incompetence of mothers and of their domestic organisation was seen as the principal factor in these problems and hence the training of their daughters as at least one element in their solution.

Official and professional belief in the necessity for the teaching of domestic subjects to elementary schoolgirls, notwithstanding their early leaving age, was far too well-established by 1914 to be dislodged either by the few and scattered arguments against it, or by the frequent revelations of the gulf between the theory behind such teaching and the practice in the schools. Recent studies have analysed the reasons for, and have charted the pre-war developments of domestic instruction in all types of school.[1] These developments included the early stages of grant aid from the Education Department in the later nineteenth century, the appointment of inspectresses for needlework, cookery and laundry, pilot schemes undertaken by some large urban school boards, and the emergence of a body of trained teachers of domestic subjects. They organised themselves

1 C. Dyhouse, 'Good Wives and Little Mothers : Social Anxieties and the Schoolgirl's Curriculum 1890-1920' Oxford Review of Education 3 (1) 1976, 21-35.
A. Turnbull, 'Women, Education and Domesticity : A Study of the Domestic Subjects Movement 1870-1914' Unpublished PhD. Thesis London, CNAA, 1983.
C. Manthorpe, 'Science or Domestic Science? The Struggle to define an appropriate Science Education for Girls in early Twentieth Century England' History of Education Vol.15 (3) 1986, 195-213.

within the National Union of Women Workers in 1896 and achieved their separate organisation in 1897 as the Association of Teachers of Domestic Science ('Subjects' being substituted for 'Science' in 1909).[2] The pace quickened early in the new century, with strong ideological pressures emerging to bolster traditional arguments on the need to foster renewed concern among women for their domestic and maternal duties. This concern was in C. Dyhouse's phrase 'being re-phrased in terms of Social Darwinistic assumptions about evolution and social progress'.[3]

The 1904 Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration laid emphasis on the training of girls in both infant care and domestic duties, though favouring this instruction for older girls in continuation classes 'at which the attendance of girls who have left school should be made compulsory twice a week during certain months of the year'. A 'judicious discretion' was proposed in enforcing attendance, including the possible exemption of girls in domestic service, and the modification of hours for factory girls 'said to make the worst wives'.[4] However the response of the Board of Education, with the powerful and sustained interest of Sir Robert Morant, was primarily to survey, criticise and re-inforce teaching within the schools, both elementary and secondary. 'Though the classes should never resolve themselves into a training for domestic service or for any other special employment, they ought to be designed to fit girls by repeated practice, to undertake when they leave school the various household duties which fall to the lot of all women.'[5] To this end the woman inspectorate was enlarged and strengthened under the formidable leadership of Maude Lawrence responsible as Chief Woman

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2 Hereafter referred to as the ATDS. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the ATDS for 1909 Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick (hereafter MRC Warwick) MSS 177/1/1/1, n.5, XII (2). See also Beatrice Webb in her series on 'Organisations of Women in the Elementary School World' writing on the ATDS New Statesman 2 October 1915.

3 C. Dyhouse, 'Social Darwinistic ideas and the development of Women's Education' History of Education Vol.5 (1) 1976, 41-58.

4 Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration [Cd. 2175] 1904, Vol.1, 'Report and Appendix', para.230.

5 Board of Education, Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the work of Public Elementary Schools [Cd. 2638] 1905.

Inspector, for the Special Report on the Teaching of Cookery of 1907 and the General Report on the Teaching of Domestic Subjects of 1912, both of these being specifically concerned with public elementary school children. The earlier report, though bitterly attacked by the ATDS as 'misleading to the general public and distinctly unfair to the teachers'[6] combined unsparing criticism of bad practice and poor organisation with awareness of the acute difficulties facing the teachers so that the total effect was bracing rather than discouraging. The worst failings were tackled vigorously to the extent that five years later the Chief Inspector could comment 'the amount of reform that has been accomplished is really remarkable, and the whole question of Domestic subjects teaching is now regarded from a different point of view'. London organisation came in for particular praise and indeed even in1907 LCC cookery instruction had gained the rare commendation of 'satisfactory'.[7]

Further revelations of urban poverty and ill-health, as the welfare legislation of 1906-1911 came into force, so strengthened the consensus of opinion on the need for domestic studies that public criticism seldom went beyond matters of timing and detail of courses, though concern at the interference with other subjects was occasionally voiced. Thus Professor Alexander Darroch of Edinburgh University, a frequent contributor to current educational debate, while asserting in 1914 that the fundamental aim of the education of girls was to produce 'a race of healthy, intelligent and morally earnest wives, mothers and housekeepers', insisted on the need for a sound general education. To this end he considered that all teaching of domestic subjects should be banished from the elementary school including even needlework, the oldest established branch, and be continued in some form at evening or day continuation classes after the age of fourteen.[8] An even more cogent defence of the elementary schoolgirl's

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6 ATDS Annual Report for 1907 MRC Warwick,13; MSS 177/4/4/1.

7 Board of Education, Special Report on the Teaching of Cookery to Public Elementary School Children in England and Wales, 1907.
Idem., General Report on the Teaching of Cookery to Public Elementary School Children in England and Wales 1912.

8 A. Darroch, Education and the New Utilitarianism (London 1914).

right to as full a general education as possible came from a former Board of Education Inspector Mrs E. D. Marvin giving evidence in 1909 before the Consultative Committee on Attendance at Continuation schools. While admitting the need for some basic domestic training in schools she disagreed strongly with over-concentration on such instruction in the last two years of a girl's school life.

> She did not think girls could afford to lose the training in those two years in subjects of general culture; it was just the time when they began to take an interest in literature and in science. As much time as possible should be given to subjects that widened the mind and elevated the character - such as literature, history, and nature study. The work of the home, she insisted later in her evidence, was easy enough to learn for anyone who had a sense of the importance of home life ... They (the girls) must understand the relationship of the arduous and dreary drudgery of the home to citizenship and to the development of the human race. This could be given to girls at school. It was better to give this than to spend the brief years at school on the quickly forgotten details of cooking and cleaning.

In response to a question Mrs Marvin took her argument further.

> She believed it was infinitely better for a woman to have a love of Shakespeare than to be able to make a good pudding, because a woman who had such knowledge would undoubtedly possess the ability and will to learn to cook if it became necessary to do so. Whereas a girl who had neglected Shakespeare to learn to make a pudding could probably not realise the importance of taking trouble to get the pudding perfectly made.[9]

So forthright an attitude was rare, but there is evidence of some London headmistresses' concern that giving pupils periods of concentrated instruction at the domestic subjects' centres would interfere with the humanising effects of literature and the exercise of their personal influence on the girls in the last months of school life. They were particularly opposed to girls leaving school direct from the centres. The LCC Educational Adviser, Dr William Garnett, referred to this concern in a

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9 Report of the Consultative Committee on Attendance (Compulsory or Otherwise) at Continuation Schools [Cd. 4758] 1909, II Summaries of Evidence, 592-596.

report made early in 1914[10] at a time when the Council was organising pilot schemes in some divisions to give thirteen year-olds shorter more intensive periods of domestic training, a practice much approved of by the ATDS. It appears from a memorandum from the Education Officer that the headmistresses' objections were taken seriously and adjustments made to meet them.[11]

The ATDS at its annual conference in 1913 showed every confidence in the importance of its work, while being well aware of problems and shortcomings. Thus a delegate's report from an international congress in Ghent mentioned ruefully that 'nearly all we spoke to considered our Domestic Economy training was weak on the moral, or ethical and spiritual side, that we lacked vision, that our outlook was limited and dull'.[12] Dominant however, was a tone of missionary zeal and enthusiasm for the work in hand. Editorial comment in Education acclaimed the unity of aim expressed by teachers, inspectors and organisers. Speeches and discussion presented the teacher of domestic subjects as a moral force, as the inculcator of thrift and of every form of good domestic practice, and as the bridger of the gulf between school and home, while alert to see parental sense of responsibility maintained. Mrs Marvin's approach was implicitly rejected.

> In this mundane life of ours puddings must come before poetry, a clean body before a clean soul, foundations of all kinds before superstructure, however desirable and however beautiful. The teacher who can give the potential mother that foundation of hard fact, technical skill, power of alert manipulation, and mastery of detail, which will enable her to run a home, to get the utmost value for each household penny, to take care of her own and her children's bodies, to guard and train others younger than herself, may be assured that she is not merely instructing in 'subjects', but handing on a knowledge of life which will enable other generations to live and live well.[13]

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10 GLRO EO/GEN/6/79 'Instruction in Domestic Economy' Report by the Educational Adviser to the Education Committee and sub-Committees 21 February 1914.

11 GLRO EO/GEN/6/15 Memorandum from the Education Officer to the Elementary Education sub-Committee on continuous periods of Instruction at Domestic Economy Centres 3 February 1914.

12 Annual Report of the ATDS for 1913 MRC Warwick MSS 177/4/4/1, 10.

13 Education Vol.21, 6 June 1913, 348-349. Education had become the official journal of the ATDS in 1904.

Five months later, in November 1913, the publication of an interim report 'The Teaching of Domestic Subjects in Elementary Schools' presented a less lofty perspective. Issued by the Educational sub-Committee of the ATDS, and approved by both its Executive and Scientific Committees (the latter a recent formation owing its inception largely to London stimulus), the report criticised existing teaching methods as pedantic and theoretical, particularly in cookery. Editorial comment in Education was brutally outspoken on teacher attitudes

> Their lack of originality of ideas, their postponement until another day - usually the Greek Kalends - of all processes of thought ... their dependence on syllabuses drawn up for them by a central body ... in short their paralysing conservatism towards anything new, has hitherto been the leading obstacle in the path of reform of method.[14]

However much so stinging an attack may have been justified, there was certainly no complacency within the leadership of the Association over teacher standards or adequacy of training. Nevertheless, belief in the urgent need to extend their work in the elementary schools continued to find forthright expression. In January 1914 Miss Isabel Cleghorn, an ex-President of the National Union of Teachers, speaking in Bradford pressed 'for the third time' that housecraft teaching for girls be taken seriously and delays overcome. In her speech she emphasised the social conditions of many elementary schoolgirls 'bad housing, sweated labour, overcrowding, starvation wages and many other hindrances to progress' rather than reciting the familiar litany of accusations against the households and families of working people. She stressed two factors, the removal of girls from the mother's day-to-day training by compulsory schooling, giving the school a heavy responsibility to replace this, and the current pattern of women's employment :

> About four million women in this country are wage-earners. Of these only some four hundred thousand are engaged in intellectual

14 Education Vol.22, 4 November 1913, 308.

pursuits. The remaining three and a half million are either in factories and workshops, in domestic service or employed as milliners, dressmakers, shirtmakers or some kindred form of wage-earning work. At least one million out of the four will be perpetual wage-earners.

Are we doing our duty if we do not give them the chance of obtaining some instruction in the art, science and practice of housecraft? ... Why should you leave it to chance that the future woman to become head of the future home should come to her kingdom totally untrained and unqualified for that important position?[15]

Both Miss Cleghorn and Mrs M. E. Pillow[16] spoke of the teacher of domestic subjects as a creator in girls of 'divine discontent' as they learnt to compare the good standards taught in domestic classes with the dirt and disorder of their homes and neighbourhoods. Mrs Pillow urged teachers to study in detail the surroundings from which their pupils came, and to promote in the girls 'a discontent with evil conditions which we may rightly consider divine discontent if it results in personal endeavours to improve the general conditions of our land'.[17]

The radical National Federation of Women Teachers from time to time challenged what it saw as overemphasis on domestic studies and the grandiose claims for their importance. In March 1914 an article on 'Domestic Training for Girls' from a Metropolitan supervisor from East Ham, Miss A. G. Hewitt, claimed that

It is the duty of women teachers to see that schemes for domestic training do not usurp too large a part of our girls' limited time in school. We fully realise that the improvement of the race largely depends on the efficiency of the mothers of the future. Unduly curtailing the educational opportunities of girls under fourteen years

15 Education Vol.23, 9 January 1914, 30. Miss Cleghorn had previously spoken on the subject in Sheffield in 1908, and Nottingham in 1913.

16 Margaret Eleanor Pillow : Training College Examiner in Domestic Economy and writer on domestic subjects since the 1880s. She was a long-standing member and senior officer of the ATDS.

17 Education Vol.23, 13 March 1914, 168. Mrs Pillow was speaking at a conference of the National Training School of Cookery.

> of age will not secure the enlightened motherhood our country so much needs ... Women teachers must insist that practical courses in dressmaking, housewifery etc. which are becoming a veritable obsession in some districts, shall be judged in the same light as any strictly vocational training for boys.

She urged teachers not to be influenced by wails for domestic servants or by 'voluble letters in the press bewailing the domestic inefficiencies of the girl products of our elementary schools'. It was no part of a teacher's duty 'to train at the ratepayer's expense cheap and efficient domestic helps for the comfort and convenience of the middle classes', and domestic training was a valuable part of a girl's training but only a part. She concluded

> Too often in educational conferences a woman's expression of opinion has been confined exclusively to matters of domestic training. Thus no doubt an impression has been created that women experts in education attach an overwhelming importance to a strictly practical domestic training for girls. Federation members *must* counteract this.[18]

While the war brought inevitable restraints to the teaching of domestic subjects in school such as requisitioned buildings and teacher shortages, arguments both practical and moral in its favour were intensified. The practical were not far to seek, with longer hours for many working mothers, official pressure for the thrifty use of food[19], and the promotion of work in schools for troops and refugees. Moral arguments were invoked, stressing the need to combat the 'false and temporary glamour' to girls of men's work available in wartime 'beside which women's work appears as drudgery' and so 'to elevate the home crafts to their proper place as skilled and honoured labour'. The aimless drudge must be able to see herself as a potential home organiser.[20] Pre-war opposition to overconcentration on domestic training continued to find occasional expression through the National Federation. A resolution at their 1915 annual conference

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18 'Domestic Training for Girls' The Schoolmistress 26 March 1914, 542.

19 Note in the Annual Report of the ATDS for 1917 12, that the Ministry of Food had taken up the suggestion of the Association that their trained lecturers should help in propaganda work for food economy. MRC Warwick MSS 177/6/1/9.

20 'Vocational Training for Girls' Times Educational Supplement 29 March 1917.

expressed opposition to 'undue emphasis being placed on the more strictly utilitarian side of a schoolgirl's training to the detriment of her general education'. The mover claimed that 'the present arrangements for filling the domestic subjects classes nearly always handicapped the brighter girl'. A second resolution recognising the need for some domestic training for girls coupled it with a demand for the raising of the school leaving age.[21]

London County Council provision for domestic instruction in elementary schools was probably as thorough as any in the country. As in most urban local education authorities, training in cookery, laundry and housework was organised in special centres, each of which served several schools. London centres had drawn high praise in the 1912 report as 'excellent and well-equipped', a reflection of the care given to them under the Chief Education Officer, Robert (later Sir Robert) Blair since 1905. The normal division of time was for one half day a week to be spent at the centre, spread over two years. The LCC policy, strictly maintained during the war, of keeping children at school until their fourteenth birthday[22] made possible experiments, touched on earlier, in certain London boroughs to give more concentrated periods of half a week for six months, and in some other boroughs of virtual whole-time attendance for three months. As mentioned above, some headmistresses were opposed to such concentration for their older girls, but advantages claimed for the experiments included better grading of courses, improved understanding of actual home conditions, and less disruption of the ordinary work of the school.[23]

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21 Report of the Annual Conference of the National Federation of Women Teachers (hereafter NFWT) The Schoolmistress 8 April 1915, 25-26.

22 *Idem.*, 'Metropolitan Notes' 23 December 1915. A deputation from some London tradesmen suggesting the release of some schoolchildren for war work was firmly rejected.

23 GLRO EO/WEL/1/19 Report by the Education Officer on Educational Provision in Domestic Economy 6 June 1917, 7. The Report refers to 434 Domestic Economy Centres in existence and the provision of ten more every year authorised by the Council. See also 'Assessment of Schemes for shorter continuous periods of Domestic Science Training'. The London Teacher 22 January 1915, 34.

Attitudes to school domestic studies in London in the years before and during the war can usefully be examined from four points of view : how the teachers and the tuition given in the centres were regarded from both inside and outside the education service and in particular how far they could provide any bridge between school and homes frequently troubled and disrupted by the war; current attitudes to needlework, the oldest of these studies, based not in the centres but in school, and thrust into an artificial prominence by the war; how far domestic studies were supposed to relate to the progress of elementary science teaching for girls; and to what extent there was any current belief that such studies were appropriate for boys as well as for girls.

The almost total absence after 1913 from Board of Education files for individual LCC schools of HMI reports, and the virtual suspension of LCC inspectors' reports after 1915 has been noted earlier.[24] Occasional needlework reports appeared in the school log books, but nothing whatsoever in the form of written reports from women inspectors of work in the centres. Three domestic studies supervisors in the London area were in charge of liaison between schools and centres, and log books occasionally record their visits to the headmistress but without further comment. Lack of sympathetic contact between teachers of domestic subjects and class teachers had long been recognised by the ATDS leadership, and the isolation of staff in centres was a problem specifically commented on in the 1912 Report. Extravagant claims for the significance of the teacher of domestic subjects continued to be made during the war, referring to her as 'the repository and trustee of the oldest and earliest-framed body of doctrine and method the earth can show', 'the guardian of the hearthplace', the 'powerful artificer of young minds' and 'the inspirer of the mothers and the future mothers of the Empire with the spirit of true citizenship'.[25] Meanwhile the reality of her demanding and often arduous post involved the organising of cookery, laundry and housecraft for large

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24 Chapter I *supra*, n.57.

25 Education Vol.27, January 1916, 42-43; and *ibid.*, June 1916, 260.

groups of twelve to fourteen year-olds, frisky with temporary release from ordinary school restraints. Isolation from her colleagues accentuated her discipline problems and the new LCC punishment code of 1913 specifically denied her the use of the cane.[26] Study of the log books in wartime suggests a persistently negative relationship. Headmistresses were harassed by staff shortages including, sometimes under considerable pressure from inspectors, the secondment of experienced women teachers to boys' departments, and a variety of other problems from lack of fuel and overcrowding to disruption from daytime air raids. Consideration of domestic studies, far from being seen as central to the girls' development, virtually never excited remark in the elaborate and detailed entries required by the authorities, except to record difficulties. Most common of these was the return of girls from the centre because of the teacher's absence, or, less frequently, when discipline problems were referred back to the school.[27]

Although in purely technical terms there were clear advantages in the centres policy these were purchased at considerable cost. Teachers there were cut off from the genuine enthusiasms and occasional excitements of school life which emerge in spite of wartime difficulties from the log books - the Shakespeare Tercentenary celebrations of April 1916, the entertainment of wounded and convalescent soldiers,[28] open days and out-of-school trips. The need for better integration was mentioned in the report of an LCC Departmental Conference on Elementary Education in October 1917. After considering the need for handicraft rooms for boys to be located in the schools, the report continued

> Time has not been at our disposal to relate this idea to the girls' departments and domestic economy instruction, but we think

26 'Discipline in Domestic Training Centres' The Schoolmistress 27 April 1916, 54.

27 Evidence from GLRO log books. On return of girls from centres see for example Queensmill Road School (EO/DIV1/QNR/LB/3), Blakesley Street School (EO/DIV5/BLA/LB/3), Charles Dickens School (EO/DIV8/CHA/LB/1); on discipline problems White Lion Street School (EO/DIV3/WHI/LB/6), and Kilburn Lane School (EO/DIV2/KIL/LB/9).

28 The London Teacher 31 March 1916, 201. Editorial request that no more accounts of such entertaining be sent in as so many had been submitted that the subject was 'over-exposed'.

> something along the same lines is possible. We consider it of fundamental importance that the handicraft and domestic economy instructors should become an integral part of the staff of the school to which they are attached, and this is not possible under the Centre system.[29]

Further criticism, coupled with a re-statement of the belief that a good general education was the first priority, was expressed two years after the war at a time when hopes for compulsory continuation classes, at least between fourteen and sixteen, were still considerable.[30] At a meeting in 1920 of the London Head Teachers' Association a forthright statement on the matter was produced under several headings:

1. That the time which elapses between the instruction and the time when a girl can reasonably be expected to apply it, is too great for the instruction to be of any practical use, and such instruction would yield better results if postponed to a later age.

2. That a great deal of the work done in the Centres is mechanical and unpractical involving much repetition.

3. The instruction does not form an integral part of the school curriculum.

4. Girls must have the same opportunities as boys and these subjects interfere unduly with the successful working of the curriculum, cutting into the time which should be given to the teaching of literature, history and geography at a time (12-14 years) when a broad, general and humane education should be given.

Following discussion, the meeting passed a resolution urging the postponement of domestic studies until after fourteen.[31]

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29 GLRO EO/HFE/1/49 Report to the Education Officer of the LCC of a Departmental Conference on Elementary Education October 1917.

30 D. W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation Experiment' History of Education Vol.4 (1) 1977, 36-49. The decision of the LCC Education Committee to limit Day Continuation courses to one year for the fourteen to fifteen year olds, was not taken until June 1921.

31 GLRO EO/HFE/1/109 Memorandum from the London Head Teachers' Association, 17 December 1920.

If the relationship of domestic studies' teachers and teaching with colleagues in the schools was to some extent unsatisfactory, one of their essential functions was seen as the making and keeping of contact with pupils' homes to bring knowledge of approved domestic standards and practice to working-class mothers, either directly or indirectly through their daughters. The Chief Education Officer of the LCC speaking at an ATDS conference in 1910 had nevertheless warned against the dangers of a patronising outlook

> The test for a teacher of domestic science ought to be "can you go into nineteen-twentieths of the working men's homes and conduct that home better than the women now there?" He knew some admirable teachers of domestic economy but he also knew some admirable women who managed homes and he doubted whether the best teachers of domestic economy would ever beat the best managers of homes.[32]

Two years later in the General Report of 1912 the Chief Woman Inspector wrote of the 450 domestic subjects teachers in London

> Where the teachers have a knowledge of conditions under which their pupils live, they are able to make the teaching of additional value; but too often among younger teachers especially this knowledge is lacking, and little thought is given to the home circumstances of the children. Some teachers endeavour to get into touch with the parents a few of whom show appreciation of the instruction given by sending letters of thanks or by paying visits to the Centres.[33]

The survey of mothers' attitudes to elementary education conducted by the London Branch of the Training College Association in 1916 and referred to in Chapter II iii *supra*, contained some brief comments on domestic subjects classes

> Do you find their lessons in cooking, needlework or laundry work make them useful at home? (a) Cooking All say it is helpful, though most agree that is is too extravagant for working people, especially

32 Report of speech given at the Annual Conference of ATDS in London, The Times 28 May 1910.
33 Board of Education, General Report 1912 *op.cit.*, para.71.

the recipes for pastry and cakes. (b) Needlework The cutting-out is useful, but nearly all say there is not enough mending and too much fancy-work. (c) Laundry The answers varied greatly. One mother said it was taught so well that her girl (aged 12) could do the washing for the house; most like them to do it at school but would not let them try it at home. There was a good deal of adverse criticism, but the reasons were not very clear - "waste of time", "fussy", "not useful" etc. All seemed to think it better than it used to be; many complained the children forgot it as soon as they left the classes.[34]

Demand for domestic subjects' teachers had always outrun supply and war circumstances stretched the school service severely even under an authority as well-supplied as the LCC. Wartime jobs in catering and canteen work attracted a number of teachers away,[35] but those in the centres often took on extra work likely to bring them more into touch with pupils' families. Some worked with voluntary societies to provide the sudden huge increase in school meals in the early months of the war, and later when food shortages became acute in 1917-1918 ran classes, lectures and demonstrations on the economical use of food and used school classes to drive the message home. How far mothers welcomed, accepted or made use of this guidance is impossible to estimate. Helen Silletoe, historian of domestic subjects teaching and herself a veteran of the service first as teacher and from 1904 as HMI, wrote of this period 'Every pupil became a home missioner of wartime cookery. Many mothers visited the centres for the purpose of obtaining advice on this important matter'. She is a careful and conscientious writer, not given to hyperbole, and one can only mentally substitute 'Some pupils...' and see the exaggeration as the expression of her deep pride in the wartime service of these teachers.[36]

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34 Chapter II III n.80 *supra*.

35 Annual Report of the Board of Education 1917-1918 [Cmd. 167] 1919, para.9, 3-4.

36 H. Silletoe, A History of the Teaching of Domestic Subjects (London 1933) 171. Helen Silletoe was an Executive Council member of the ATDS for some years before being appointed as HMI in 1904.

Bridging the gap, for both elementary and secondary schools, between domestic subjects' lessons and the home was discussed in a series of Times Educational Supplement articles in 1916-1917, particularly in relation to cookery. The home, it was argued, had been lost sight of when cookery became a 'subject' like Geography or Latin. Girls were set to learn off by heart tables of foodstuffs and to 'talk glibly about carbohydrates, proteids (sic) and vegetable acids'[37] and there was a serious need to involve those actually engaged in running a home.

> We women teachers shall have to get it into our heads that we are not in the best position to know about girl training either on the moral, hygienic, economic or even the practical side. Education authorities must call upon the ordinary housewife. Every domestic subjects committee ought to have upon it one young married wife of a working man with a baby in arms; one older married woman of the lower middle class who has brought up a daughter to marriageable age; one teacher of domestic subjects; one headmistress of an elementary school; one man with a home of his own and not too well off.[38]

The pre-eminence of cookery in these discussions is understandable. Laundry ran it a poor second in interest and in the number of classes held, while housework - cleaning, polishing, bedmaking - could be mere drudgery all too familiar to the child of a poor home, and often with little or no meaning for children from the poorest. Needlework however held a special place, being firmly rooted in the schools, likely to be of direct use at home, and, when translated into knitting, a wartime source of pride to the school, and for the girls of an unaccustomed sense of superiority over the boys.[39]

Needlework in school, however limited and poor in performance, had a long tradition justifying it as a proper and modest occupation for girls 'it

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37 'Domestic Subjects' from "A Correspondent" Times Educational Supplement 28 September 1916, 155 and *Idem.*, 2 November 1916, 191.

38 *Idem.*, 11 November 1917.

39 C. W. Kimmins, 'An Investigation of London Children's Ideas as to how they can help in time of war' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.4, 5 March 1917, 80-87. See also Chapter V II *infra*.

tames boisterous natures. Interest the roughest girl in a bit of needlework and she will sit still for hours'.[40] From the 1840s it had a place in voluntary schools earning grant, and appeared in the pupil-teacher syllabus for girls from the system's inception in the same decade. The reputation of needlework as a kind of drudgery with little or nothing to commend it except to keep a large class of girls with heads bent and fingers occupied was well founded, even down into the infant schools. It shared in the widespread criticism of all parts of the elementary school curriculum from educationists and women inspectors, as the ending of the Revised Code made prospects for change in content and methods of teaching more hopeful. However little hard-pressed teachers might respond, finding class sizes, discipline problems and lack of equipment insuperable barriers to experiment, the moulders of educational opinion through Board and local authority publications and directives and through the work of the Inspectorate, did try to ensure that certain changes made their way into classrooms.[41]

The burden on teachers was increased by exhortations to link needlework to the inculcation of cleanliness and neatness.

> Children will not remember the lessons of neatness, cleanliness and tidiness, all of which should form part of a needlework lesson, if they are allowed to come to school untidy and unkempt ... Mending clothes is a matter of self-respect and thrift, as well as of needlework ... every effort should be made to impress upon them the charm of neatness and cleanliness in their personal clothing ... It should be looked upon as a matter of shame that any girl should reach woman's estate without a practical knowledge of what use she can make of a needle.[42]

A few years later at a conference in London the Senior Medical Officer for Wolverhampton, Dr W. S. Badger returned to this theme in a censorious

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40 Lady Wolverton, 'Introduction' to Amy K. Smith, Needlework for Student Teachers (London 1914). Amy K. Smith (d.1916) was a much respected leading member of the ATDS and for some years Hon. Treasurer of the Association.

41 See for example Board of Education Circular 730 'Suggestions for the Teaching of Needlework in Public Elementary Schools', 1909.

42 *Ibid.*, para.6. 3-4.

speech which drew sharp responses from some teachers and social workers in the audience

> Girl scholars should wear clean pinafores; in the upper standards they should be taught to mend their own garments and particularly their stockings ... A weekly stocking drill, when all footgear is removed for the discovery of holes, might usefully be associated with the foregoing. The pinning together of torn clothes should be absolutely forbidden; mending and the provision of tapes and buttons should be insisted upon.[43]

Needlework in London elementary schools was severely criticised by the Board of Education in 1911 for shortcomings ranging from insufficient equipment to lack of enterprise by teachers in helping girls to make new garments for their own use and learn to mend efficiently. The continued use of the Specimen Piece for stitching practice, for long the *bête-noire* of reformers, was also attacked. It was a form of instruction understandably clung to by teachers with classes of up to sixty in some schools, and having to practise the most rigid economy of materials so as to balance expenditure with sales.

> School practice often lags behind the theory, simply through the size of classes and the impossibility of giving the necessary individual teaching. Obviously sixty girls can more easily be taught to seam or buttonhole on specimens (all the worst failures being conveniently thrown away), than to mend sixty different types of rent, or cut out and make up new material with the risk of serious waste.[44]

The LCC Education Committee responded rapidly to the criticism, with an experimental scheme of needlework instruction tried out in twenty girls' departments, and by 1914 could report that the results 'fully justify the extension of the scheme to other schools'.[45] The 'Aim of Instruction' set out in the 1914-1915 Handbook had a brisk and practical tone :

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43 W. S. Badger quoted in C. E. Hecht (ed.), Rearing an Imperial Race being the Report of the Second Guildhall Conference on Diet, Cookery and Hygiene (London 1913) 137.

44 M. L. V. Hughes, Citizens to be : A Social Study of Health, Wisdom and Goodness with special reference to Elementary Schools (London 1915) 197.

45 GLRO EO/GEN/6/15 LCC Report on Needlework Instruction with reference to the Board of Education Criticisms of 1911 January 1914 and see 'Needlework Instruction in the Metropolis' Education Vol.23, 13 February 1914, 107-108.

> The aim of the needlework teaching in elementary schools should be to fit the girls for the ordinary duties of a housewife. The object of the mother of a family is to turn out as quickly as possible, garments but not fine sewing ... The girls should leave school thoroughly handy not merely with their needles but also with their scissors, and they should be able to make simple articles for their own use.[46]

Just as handwork for boys was accompanied by claims that it was not merely useful but highly educative in developing accuracy, perseverance, observation and better co-ordination of hand and eye, so for the improved forms of needlework it was claimed that they inculcated patience, accuracy, perseverance and indirectly thrift as girls saved small sums to buy finished garments. Even though many London girls went into the needle trades the emphasis was not vocational in the wage-earning sense[47] but, increasingly during the war years, was immediate, practical and domestic, while some forms, particularly knitting, became a major patriotic activity. Extra needlework time given to finish off work became a commonplace in some schools, and the tally of parcels completed and dispatched for soldiers and others a matter for pride and special comment. The use of needlework classes as a mollifying practice in times of distress and strain emerges in some log books. Children would be settled down to sewing in a period of air raid alarms, or even after the excitement of some school function; needlework classes were a standby to fill out a timetable for older backward girls, and displays were used to attract mothers, with whom relations could often be strained, to a school meeting.[48] A sourly critical attack in 1916 on the neglect of needlework, especially of mending, in elementary schools specifically exempted London from these strictures.[49]

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46 LCC Handbook of Classes for Teachers 1914-1915 22.

47 An exception to this can be found in the Log Book for Hargrave Park School (EO/DIV3/HAR/LB/10). The Headmistress was a needlework enthusiast and an LCC Inspector's Report of May 1914 mentioned that many girls had been placed "in good situations" because of their needlework dexterity. His Report was, however, very critical of the rest of the school work.

48 GLRO examples from log books. Holbeach Road School (EO/DIV7/HOL/LB/5) for parcels tally; Hamond Square School (EO/DIV4/HAM/LB/4) for needlework as a calming influence; Drayton Park School (EO/DIV5/DRA/LB/5) for visits from mothers.

49 E. Sellers, 'An Antediluvian on Education of Working-class Girls' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.80, 1916, 337-349.

How far the extra time spent by girls on needlework hampered their studies in relation to boys cannot be estimated, though it did raise some concern. A letter in The London Teacher commenting on girls being outdone in arithmetic added 'She is tremendously handicapped by the two hours a week spent on needlework, which the boy who surpasses her in sums devotes to practical arithmetic, geometry and algebra'.[50] In September 1914 the NFWT column in The Schoolmistress made the same point. While the girls did their two hours of needlework boys often did more arithmetic, and they also had applied arithmetic and geometry at the handicraft centres while the girls were working at domestic subjects.[51] For the minority of girls being entered for the Junior County Scholarship examinations circumstances may have been different, as we find the Chief Examiner's Report on the examinations for 1916-1917 commenting favourably on the good standards maintained in arithmetic by the girl candidates.[52]

In her chapter on 'The Indispensible Instruction : School Needlework', Dr A. Turnbull analyses the development of this subject in schools in the early twentieth century and examines the situation in which a subject so closely connected with the ideal of modest, conforming home-bound girls and women, was nevertheless coloured by the growing zeal and expertise associated with other domestic studies. The sharp wind of professionalism was needed to stir needlework from its lowly status, improve standards of equipment in classrooms and give the expectation of useful and even pleasant results for some girls. But once the fillip given by patriotic wartime activity had faded the association not only with domesticity but with a proper docility remained strong.[53]

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50 The London Teacher 14 March 1913, 232.

51 The Schoolmistress 17 September 1914, 462.

52 Report of the Chief Examiner on Examinations held in November and December 1916 for the Award of Junior County Scholarships (LCC 1916).

53 A. Turnbull, *op.cit.*, Section II, Chapter V.

Science lessons for both girls and boys held a place in the elementary school that was modest in scope, practical and utilitarian. R. J. W. Selleck sets out the stages by which elementary science teaching was established, and analyses the pressures behind this, though his account and analysis are implicitly related to boys.[54] By 1905 the inclusion of science in the Board's Suggestions marked it clearly as a school subject with an educational and not primarily vocational purpose, though Selleck draws attention to the influential men who related its growth to the need to maintain Britain's industrial supremacy.[55] The basis was the 'observation lesson', long established and frequently derided, often linked to nature study and a form of teaching widespread in junior classes. For older pupils the work diverged, with the girls generally being directed to hygiene - the elementary study of the rules of personal and domestic health - together with a little 'general science'.

How far was this general science likely to make use of domestic examples for experiment and observation? How far would it be related to the teaching of domestic subjects? Close co-operation between schools and centres would seem the ideal solution. Dr de Mouilpied, an LCC District Inspector, may have had this in mind when, in a paper read at the 1912 Annual Conference of the ATDS, he was strongly urging the use of household utensils and materials as a means of scientific training instead of running two parallel courses as was often done.[56] However, apart from any possible friction between the two, difficulties of location between schools and centres may well have made genuine co-operation impracticable, and may have been one factor in the dissatisfaction with the centres system in London previously noted.

From some evidence available there seems little doubt that general science was often taught in relation to practical matters in the home. In

54 R. J. W. Selleck, The New Education 1870-1914 (London and Melbourne 1968) 107-122.
55 *Ibid.*, 124.
56 Annual Report of the ATDS for 1912 MRC Warwick MSS 177/4/4/1, 35.

1914 a Board Memorandum largely concerned with boys' classes singled out for inclusion a detailed example of girls' general science, making no reference to domestic subjects' centres, though the school concerned was in one of the more prosperous neighbourhoods of South East London where these would certainly have been available. While the boys were concerned with soldering, water tap problems, simple electrical experiments and some simple constructions, the girls' lessons dealt with

> soap, soda, baking powder, furniture polish, Condy's fluid, flour, cotton, wool, linen, bleaching of stains, inflammability of flannelette, dyes, mordants, household ammonia, simple foodstuffs and adulteration ... At visits previously mentioned the girls were ... dyeing raffia, learning the use of the telephone, making articles such as brass paste and butter (this was done in a churn consisting of a rotory egg whisk and a small glass jar), or cloudy ammonia. In their classrooms the girls weave patterns on looms; they use cane or raffia for making baskets or wicker trays ... they have recently been spinning with a spinning wheel.

The report added 'It should be observed that the boys are responsible for making the egg whisk, the looms, the bases for the wicker trays and the spinning wheel.' The publicity given to this school's work by the Board, (for the account reappears in a pamphlet published in 1920) suggests that it was looked on as worthy of imitation.[57]

The Board was distinctly cautious over attempts to involve too much background of science in the official domestic studies courses. The fear appears to have been that both would suffer as a result. Certainly a crowded domestic subjects course could not provide adequate training in the scientific essentials of observation and reasoning. On the other hand

> girls need not study the theory of conductivity in order to find out the relative values of flannel and calico for clothing purposes; it will be enough for them to observe the effects of these materials on the rate of cooling of a vessel containing hot water or the melting of a lump of ice. The effects of a low temperature, of clean as opposed to

57 GLRO EO/PS/2/21 Board of Education Memorandum September 1914. Reprinted in Board Pamphlet No.36 (1920) 39-40.

> dirty vessels, and of boiling on the preservation of milk could be convincingly demonstrated without any attempt to explain the chemical changes or bacteriological action involved.[58]

The Board was well aware, however, that teachers should have a good grasp of scientific principles themselves. In the Report for 1913-1914 there was an interesting critical analysis of the shortcomings of science teaching to domestic subjects' teachers in training. It appeared that 'the instruction and examination in science has been regarded by students as a useless and tiresome drawback in domestic training which must be got over as soon as maybe'. There was uncertainty as to the proper place of science in the training course and a wide gulf between the elements of general science taught, and the experiments dealing with domestic work and equipment. Calling for a need to foster 'a spirit of thoughtful enquiry' the Report continued

> In giving instruction in Elementary Physics and Chemistry no opportunity should be lost of pointing out the practical application to domestic problems of the knowledge obtained, and of enabling the student to realise that in the laboratory she is not merely performing some mysterious tricks with test tubes and bunsen burners to satisfy the requirements of official Regulations, but that an elementary knowledge of alkalis for example may serve to prolong the life of her aluminium pans.[59]

On the basis of these criticisms the Board introduced new regulations to replace those of 1907 with the aim of integrating science into the various crafts so that it became a part of the student's thinking rather than a separate 'subject' and thus infused her practice. The new regulations caused some confusion at first, but within a few years the Inspectors reported 'a fuller knowledge of elementary science' as applied to the various areas of housecraft.[60]

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58 Board of Education, Circular 904 'Suggestions for the Teaching of Elementary Science including Nature Study' 1915.

59 Board of Education, 'The Training of Teachers of Domestic Subjects' Annual Report for 1913 [Cd.7934] 1914-1916, 162-167.

60 *Idem.*, Annual Report for 1916-1917 [Cd.9045] 1918. Inspectors were reporting on the first group of students to complete their two year course under the new regulations that came into force in 1915.

It is worth noting that from the side of the domestic subjects teachers the encouragement of a scientific approach to their work stemmed in particular from the establishment of the ATDS Science Committee in 1912. The moving spirit was Arthur Smithells FRS, Professor of Chemistry at Leeds University from 1885 to 1923. As Chairman of the Committee until after the war he brought to the elementary school his passionate lifelong belief in the need to relate theoretical science to its practical applications.[61] As he wrote in 1907

> Surely there is all the difference in the world even there (in the elementary school) between domestic subjects taught as mere facts and the same subject taught with as many whys and wherefores as can be insinuated by a good teacher even when the time is very short and pupils very youthful.[62]

Smithells took a close and friendly interest in the ATDS, and among other activities the Science Committee ran an advice column of science queries arising in the course of ATDS members' teaching, so that a simple explanation could be given and where possible passed on in the lessons.

A generally unsatisfactory state of science teaching for girls at least in London schools emerged from a report issued in 1919, and authorised the previous year by the LCC Elementary Education sub-Committee. It reported on a survey carried out by R. S. Clay, Principal of theSir John Cass Technical Institute, and C. A. Keane, Principal of the Northern Polytechnic. Their report dealt largely with boys, but shed incidental light on science for girls. 'In the girls' schools in the upper standards the time given to science is as a rule less than in the boys' schools. One period is often spent at hygiene and its related subjects. Usually another short period was then given to general science which is taught experimentally in the laboratories, but with little class teaching.' The main criticism was of over-ambitious

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61 A. J. Flintham, 'The Contribution of Arthur Smithells FRS, to Science Education' History of Education Vol.6 (3) 1977, 195-208.

62 Address by Professor Smithells to the Annual Conference of the ATDS, Annual Report of the ATDS for 1907 MRC Warwick MSS 177/4/4/1.

syllabuses. After listing the contents of one such they continued 'It is impossible to cover the ground involved ... The attempt can only lead to mental confusion ... whilst the associated laboratory work must tend to degenerate into something akin to working out cookery recipes'. In a further, more specific comment the report suggested

> As regards the science instruction in the ordinary elementary girls' schools the syllabus often attempts to cover too wide a field ... unless it is possible (1) to give enough time, (2) to supply proper equipment, and (3) to employ a full-time science mistress, it would be better to restrict the scope of the course.

Under 'Conclusions and Recommendations' the Report proposed 'That in the teaching of general elementary science in relation to the affairs of the household there should be a more satisfactory background of the general principles of the sciences concerned'. The teaching of hygiene was also criticised, partly because of over-emphasis. 'It is doubtful if hygiene should appear in the course for several years if it is to retain its interest', but partly also for the more interesting reason that boys were excluded from this important area 'that instruction in animal and vegetable life, elementary physiology and hygiene should be the special prerogative of girls, while boys are trained up in ignorance of the sciences associated with the beauties of nature and the metabolism of life is an anomaly which should be rectified'.[63]

However unsatisfactory the 'science' involved may have been, one effect of associating it so clearly with the domestic processes, even down to the most mundane was to sharpen the distinction between girls' science and that of boys,[64] with the home or the domestic subjects centre becoming the testing ground rather than the laboratory. A science syllabus in use and expressly framed to correlate with work in cookery and laundry, published in The London Teacher in 1918 gives a good example of this. Illustrations

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63 GLRO EO/PS/2/21 R. S. Clay and C. A. Keane, 'The Teaching of Science in Elementary Schools of the London County Council' Elementary Education sub-Committee Report July 1919.

64 The pressure to relate Science teaching for girls to Domestic Science in secondary and higher education was a matter of acute controversy in these years. See C. Manthorpe, *op.cit. passim.*

included

> Conduction : How heat travels in solids. Application of knowledge of conduction at home, e.g. clothing, cooking, iron holders, tea cosies etc. Radiation : Heating by means of open fires. Heating by means of hot water. Polished and dull surfaces as radiators and absorbers. Use of knowledge in home e.g. bright polished teapots, glazed teapots, etc.[65]

In the light of this division over science teaching, it is relevant to conclude this survey of domestic subjects' teaching with a consideration of what views were current on the need for boys as well as girls to be involved in studies directly related to the home.

The belief that boys should take part directly in domestic studies is only occasionally expressed, though indirectly their lack of involvement is implied in a number of strictures directed against the selfishness of fathers. Mrs Marvin, some of whose evidence to the Consultative Committee on Attendance at Continuation Schools has already been quoted, spoke out firmly on the subject.

> Boys should be taught their responsibilities in the home. It was useless to teach girls about the care of a home unless boys were also taught their duties. The selfish and unsympathetic attitude of husbands had a great deal to do with the failure of home life.[66]

At the major conference of the National Food Reform Association held in London in 1912, Miss Cecile Matheson, Warden of the Birmingham Women's Settlement spoke in a similar vein.

> Our domestic and hygiene teaching is too much confined to one sex. What is the use of teaching principles of nutrition and economic distribution of income to a girl when all her male relatives are convinced that a man's strength can only be kept up by chops and steaks? He probably flourishes on his chosen diet, but underfeeding and malnutrition is the fate of his children and their mother if his food, which comes first when he is in work, swallows up a disproportionate share of the family income.

65 The London Teacher 14 June 1918.

66 Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Attendance at Continuation Schools II Summaries of Evidence (1909).

It is too often the case that what the girls learn from their teachers they unlearn from their brothers and sweethearts. This difficulty can only be met by extending domestic teaching in some measure to boys' schools ... masculine prejudice is undermining much of the healthy influence of our domestic teaching and ... this teaching should therefore be given to both sexes.[67]

In 1917 the ATDS itself took a hand in this argument, both in an official statement[68] and in a letter to H.A.L. Fisher at the Board of Education.

> At a meeting of our Council held on Saturday February 24th the question of teaching cookery and laundrywork to boys was discussed with a view to increasing the possibilities of work in this direction in elementary schools, and we were instructed to communicate to you the strong desire of the Association that the present restrictions on the teaching of cookery to boys should be removed from the Code, and that the teaching of laundrywork to boys should also be permitted. The reasons for this suggestion are :
>
> (a) That the moral and humanising effects on the boys of such teaching in cleanliness and good habits is incalculable;
> (b) That in view of the possible increase in emigration to remote districts of our colonies, knowledge of cookery and laundrywork would be invaluable to young men.

The letter ended with a reference to cookery lessons already being given to boys in seaport towns. Maude Lawrence, to whom the letter was referred for comment was not impressed. Her reply simply emphasised that all girls must be covered first and that shortage of teachers and accommodation would have to be faced.[69]

Both in organisation and by tradition elementary schooling worked against any dilution of masculine qualities for boys or of feminine attributes for girls. The effect of the war was to strengthen this as

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67 M. C. Matheson, 'Relation of School and Home' in Hecht (ed.), *op.cit.*, 94.

68 'The Place of Domestic Science in Education' being a report compiled from enquiry through local associations. Annual Report of the ATDS for 1917 MRC Warwick MSS 177/6/1/9.

69 PRO ED/11/241 Letter dated March 1917 from the Chairman of the ATDS (Miss Florence Baddeley) and the Hon. Secretary (Miss Mildred Buck) to the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education, with note attached from the Chief Woman Inspector.

Dr Kimmins's large-scale study of London schoolboys and girls in 1915 revealed.[70] The wartime tendency for boys to help out more at home in the father's absence involved no serious attempt to blur clearly defined patterns of gender behaviour. The Chief Examiner's Report for 1918 on the LCC Junior County Scholarship examination contained the following comment from a woman assistant examiner on an essay set on Peter Pan. 'Would you rather remain a boy or a girl for many years like Peter, or grow up in the usual way? Give reasons.'

> Perhaps the question of child versus adult struck home more vividly to the girl child ... She is certainly in a better position to gauge the value of the adult life before her, since her mother's worries as well as her joys are acted out beneath the girl's sharp eyes. With the boy it is not so, his father's life is a vague thing to him to which on the whole he looks forward; for few boys desired to live like Peter. One thing he is sure about, he does not want to be a girl, and some of the essays throw an interesting light on that curious aspect of English homes where the girls work and the boys play without a thought apparently that the arrangement is not one of Nature's laws.[71]

Three main strands emerge within the scattered opposition to domestic studies for young elementary schoolgirls. There was the position held by Mrs Marvin and others that a proper general education must have priority, and that the brief years of school life should not, except to the most modest extent, be used to reinforce the pattern of household drudgery that frequently was and certainly would be the lot of so many girls; secondly there was the view that however well-intentioned, the classes were largely a waste of time and the teaching quickly forgotten; and thirdly the fear, particularly from radical women and feminists that behind the pressure for domestic studies, official disclaimers notwithstanding, lay the desire to keep girls deferential and subordinate and to ensure a supply of domestic servants. Evidence for this last view, already touched on, is dealt with further in Chapter VI when the place of domestic service in girls' employment is discussed.

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70 C. W. Kimmins, 'The Special Interests of Children in the War at different Ages' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.3 (3) 6 December 1915, 145-151.

71 Report of the Chief Examiner *op.cit.*, (LCC 1918).

By the end of the war the argument that compulsory education had removed the girls from home training which the schools therefore had an obligation to supply, had tended to disappear. It was an argument that had always involved a contradiction, since the volume of criticism directed at mothers and housewives suggested little faith in the quality of training 'lost' by the girls. The increasing emphasis on professionalism in domestic subjects teaching is reflected in a brief but significant remark in the 1917 ATDS Report 'Experience has shown that this [domestic] knowledge is not as a rule acquired except as a part of organised education.[72]

A useful parallel can be drawn between the progress and difficulties of this teaching and the attempts to introduce classes in infant welfare into the elementary schools which is discussed in the next section. For both branches of study a rational case could be made out, based on the realities of life for many schoolgirls; both were in close conformity with the strong pressures current in the early twentieth century to direct girls' minds and emotions from an early age towards the home and its duties. The lack of a professional structure within the educational system for the teaching of infant welfare was however one reason at least why its growth in schools was relatively inhibited.

ii Infant Care

The teaching of infant care to young girls in elementary schools was one part of a widespread, if piecemeal, attempt gathering momentum from the 1890s, to cut excessively high rates of infant mortality and to lessen the extent of chronic ill-health and poor physique among young children. The key document for the initiative in schools, Board of Education Circular 758, was issued in 1910. Frequently referred to over the following years in

72 'The place of Domestic Science in Education' ATDS Report *op.cit.*

reports of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board, it was amended and re-issued in 1925 being then extended to cover courses in secondary schools.[73]

This officially approved attempt to train 'little mothers' in school, has been placed in a recent study in the context of the wider attack on the academic education of girls and young women in favour of greater emphasis on their education for domestic and maternal functions.[74] The standards and solid achievements in girls' secondary and higher education since the 1870s created a strong defence against this attack. Girls' departments in elementary schools however were more vulnerable, though the legal principle of compulsory education was well enough entrenched to withstand comments and suggestions that it might well be curtailed for girls.[75] The extent, however, to which heavy home responsibilities were known to fall on them, together with current anxieties over infant and young child health led not only to increased pressure for domestic subjects courses, but also to calls for mothercraft teaching well before 1910.

Such calls were a logical outcome of the emphasis on individual maternal responsibility for infant deaths which marked the infant welfare movement of the early twentieth century. Acute problems of public sanitation and other environmental factors could not be ignored, but in the numerous articles and reports on the subject took second place compared with the attention directed at working-class mothers and the frequent denunciations of their laziness, apathy and ignorance. Pressures for the education of daughters in infant care must be seen in the context of attitudes to the mothers, and of the forms taken by the infant welfare movement. Mothers were the immediate and most easily accessible

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73 Board of Education Circular 758, 1910. Memorandum on the Teaching of Infant Care and Management in Public Elementary Schools (Hereafter Infant Care Memorandum); Board of Education Circular 1353, 1925. The Teaching of Infant Care and Management to Schoolgirls.

74 C. Dyhouse, 'Good Wives and Little Mothers : Social Anxieties and the Schoolgirls' Curriculum 1890-1920' Oxford Review of Education Vol.3, No.1, 1977, 21-35.

75 Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration. Vol.2, Minutes of Evidence [Cd.2210] 1904, Qs. 5537-5557.

recipients for education, exhortation or support. The high rate of infant deaths from intestinal illness and the prevalence of rickets, both of which could be attributed to domestic dirt and bad feeding habits, could be used to underline maternal responsibility, and initiatives to admonish and instruct followed well-trodden paths in the work of the Ladies' Sanitary Association and other voluntary charitable bodies. A further impetus came from contact with similar pioneer work being undertaken on the Continent.[76] The first decade of the century saw the rapid growth of schools for mothers, infant welfare centres, babies' welcomes, weighing centres, milk depots as well as special prizes for mothers and other local ventures. 'The sudden proliferation of activity in towns all over the country meant that nomenclature remained fluid. It was essentially a period of experimentation.'[77] Some voluntary initiatives attracted municipal support and while some were shortlived others like the St. Pancras School for Mothers developed vigorously.[78] London conferences on infant mortality in 1906, 1908 and 1913 gave opportunities for local achievements to be publicised and problems to be raised, as did journals such as Child Study and National Health founded in 1908 and The Child in 1910.

A number of national bodies supported the work. These included the Institute of Hygiene, the Infants' Health Society, the National League for Physical Education and Improvement, the Food Education Society and the National League for Health, Maternity and Child Welfare all founded between 1903 and 1908. 'Local branches would unite the socially conscious gentry of a neighbourhood - doctors, clergymen, social workers, medical officers of health, councillors, teachers, nurses and health visitors, but most of all ladies whose work was voluntary and who had no other job'.[79]

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76 G. F. MacCleary MD, The Maternity and Child Welfare Movement (London 1935).

77 C. Dyhouse, 'Working-Class Mothers' Journal of Social History No.2, Winter 1978, 249.

78 E. M. Bunting (ed.), A School for Mothers (London 1907).

79 A. Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood' History Workshop Journal No.5, Spring 1978, 9-65. I am indebted to her for this paragraph.

The influential Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration published in 1904 reinforced the tendency to call mothers to account rather than to place the primary blame on the conditions outside their control under which they were frequently obliged to bear and rear their children.[80] In 1906 Dr (later Sir George) Newman struck the same note in his survey of infant mortality. Newman who became Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education in 1907 was at this time Medical Officer of Health for Bedfordshire and for the Metropolitan borough of Finsbury from which he drew the urban material for his book. Quoting the 1904 Report he wrote

> And we shall not perhaps be far from the mark if in judging the evil effects of bad housing and social conditions we give chief place to the "laziness, want of thrift, ignorance of household management and particularly of the choice and preparation of food, filth, indifference to parental obligations and drunkenness" which "largely infect adults of both sexes and press with terrible severity upon their children".

Summing up later in the book he reiterated the point 'expressed bluntly it is the ignorance and carelessness of mothers that directly causes a large proportion of the infant mortality which sweeps away in England and Wales alone 120,000 children under twelve months of age'.[81]

Despite voices raised in their defence, notably by Anna Martin writing of families in the poorest parts of Bermondsey,[82] the culpability of working-class mothers remained a central tenet within the infant welfare movement and a major argument for the training of their daughters in school. Newman referred to this training in his book, four years before the issue of Circular 758 under his authority at the Board of Education. He spoke of the comparative failure to educate elementary schoolgirls in 'domestic hygiene'. Compulsory education had deprived them of the home

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80 Report of Inter-Departmental Committee *op.cit.*, Vol.I, Report and Appendix [Cd.2175] 1904.

81 G. Newman, Infant Mortality, A Social Problem (London 1906) quoting Report *ibid.*, [Cd.2175] 15.

82 A. Martin, 'The Married Working Woman : A Study' Part I, The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.68, 1910, 1102-1108; Part II *idem.*, Vol.69, 1911, 108-122.

training formerly received and the instruction of older girls in the elementary schools was in his view the only way to counteract this.[83] Paradoxically Newman and others who held compulsory schooling responsible for the lack of home training seldom commented on whether such training was worth having in view of their severe criticisms of the mothers. He concluded by taking to task the Board of Education's Suggestions of 1905 on this topic. The section on hygiene he found 'appropriate and suitable' but having little to do with infant management.[84] School training in infant care made another appearance in 1906 among the recommendations of a conference on infant mortality held in London at which over 150 health authorities were represented.[85]

Current social-Darwinist and eugenics propaganda further concentrated attention on the mother. 'Eugenics and the infant hygiene movement combined to move the focus of preventive medicine away from the purely environmental concerns of older public health officials towards the individual from whom more immediate changes could be expected'.[86] As for social Darwinism, while its concern for the future of the race did often embrace injurious social conditions outside the mother's control, its main emphasis was on her responsibility in bearing and raising a future healthy generation. This was seen as not merely her personal and familial task but as a patriotic and racial duty. She was the agent whereby the persistant decline in population since the 1880s could be reversed and Britain be able both to populate the empire and maintain her strength in competition with other nations. The parallel eugenics movement with its more tightly-knit theoretical base, was primarily concerned with matters of individual genetic inheritance, with measures to inhibit the procreation of the unfit and to ensure the promotion of healthy racial stock. Concern with the

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83 Newman, *op.cit.*, 226.

84 Board of Education, Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools 1905, 86.

85 B. Broadbent, 'Report of the First British Conference for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, June 1906' Child Welfare Annual 1916.

86 J. Lewis, The Politics of Motherhood (London 1980) 66.

maternal role was therefore crucial to eugenists who held a variety of opinions relative to the spate of current activity over infant welfare.

Some leading eugenists feared lest work to reduce infant mortality, directed as much of it was towards the most deprived families, would foster weaklings and prejudice natural methods of selection. G. R. Searle in his analysis of the antagonism between eugenics spokesmen and sections of the medical profession, especially some medical officers of health, quoted Major Leonard Darwin, President of the Eugenics Education Society. 'Medical men must no doubt strive to keep the unfit alive; but are they not doubly bound to join us in our efforts to diminish the multiplication of unquestionably degenerate types?'[87] So long as infant welfare centres and schools for mothers saw their function as primarily educative and kept to that, they were unlikely to invite censure on such grounds, the assumption being that they would attract and influence the more intelligent mothers whose offspring should be helped to survive. A few years later it was by this argument that the moderate eugenist writer and speaker Norah March sought to calm eugenist fears about the all-encompassing aims of National Baby Week held in July 1917.[88] Some centres however, faced with the problem of severe malnutrition among expectant and nursing mothers, did cross the line between education and direct aid. In a short study of the infant welfare movement published for the National League for Physical Education and Improvement in 1913 the writer criticised the frequency with which Class B in Charles Booth's classification ('irregularly employed, shiftless and very poor') attended the centres. He commented that some centres found it better to concentrate on mothers in Classes C ('Poor with irregular earnings') and D ('Poor with regular earnings'). Too much attention to Class B entailed the giving of material aid which could swamp the work carried on with more rewarding mothers. 'The need is great and a rich harvest awaits the workers, whereas among the lowest ranks the

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87 L. Darwin, Fifth Annual Report of the Eugenics Education Society 1912-1913, 8-9, quoted in G. R. Searle 'Eugenics and Class' in C. Webster (ed.), Biology, Medicine and Society 1840-1940 (Cambridge 1981) 6, 225.

88 N. March, 'Eugenic Aspects of National Baby Week' Eugenics Review 9, 1917-1918, 97-108.

sorry return to labours ... bring despondency and despair as to whether the work is after all worth doing'. He concluded 'The work of the Infant Welfare Centres ... aim(s) not only at saving infant life but at raising the standard of health. They need not cut athwart any eugenic standard but can co-operate with it'.[89]

The charge that eugenists welcomed the death of weakly children was vigorously rebutted by devoted but moderate publicists of the movement, well aware of the damage done to eugenics in public estimation by the so-called 'better dead' stance. Dr C. W. Saleeby, leading eugenist spokesman and writer made his position clear on several occasions, denouncing not only this, but the whole view that the campaign against infant mortality was a dysgenic activity. Speaking in Liverpool, in July 1914, he called for a proper balance to be kept between nature and nurture while pointing out that slum conditions were themselves 'hideously unnatural'. 'The antithesis between nature and nurture' he declared 'which was offered by biologists who had never been responsible for the care of a single child, was false, unnatural and meaningless'.[90] Saleeby was speaking shortly before the outbreak of war. Attacks on the extreme eugenist position were, not surprisingly, to get stronger as casualty lists mounted.[91] Rather than discouraging dysgenic births the emphasis was to be on 'filling up the ranks again' while continuing to educate the mothers. Saleeby's own views on the directing of women and girls' education towards home and maternity were set out at length in 1912. While he had no respect for the general education offered to schoolgirls at the elementary level there is no reason to suppose that he would have been otherwise than supportive of infant welfare training in schools, given that a return to the home, which he looked upon as the ideal, was impracticable.[92]

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89 I. G. Gibbon, Infant Welfare Centres (London 1913). His references are to C. Booth, Life and Labour of the People of London 1st Edition (1889) Vol.1, 33-61, 'The Eight Classes'.

90 C. W. Saleeby, 'The Nurture of the Race'. Lecture given 3 July 1914 under the auspices of the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, National Health No.65, August 1914, 58.

91 Sir James Creighton-Brown, 'Child Welfare : An Imperial Necessity' The Child March 1916, 281-282. This is one among a number of examples of this wartime plea.

92 C. W. Saleeby, Woman and Womanhood : A Search for Principles (London 1912) 181-182.

By 1908-1909 with Newman as Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education and compulsory medical inspection in school beginning to throw fresh light on young child ill-health, action was likely to follow. Early in 1909 correspondence between Walter Runciman, President of the Board, and Sir Robert Morant the Chief Secretary, led to the drafting of a substantial memorandum by Dr Janet Campbell of Newman's staff. Morant and Newman were both closely involved in the five draft revisions before eventual publication in November 1910.[93] During 1910 Dr Christopher Addison, newly arrived in the Commons, produced a single clause private member's bill to make such teaching compulsory. Board of Education opposition killed it, Addison being told that lack of adequately trained teachers would make compulsion unrealistic,[94] but he was not alone in wanting to speed things up. The delay in producing a final draft led Runciman's private secretary to write pressing urgently for publication 'especially in view of the activities of Mr. Alderman Broadbent who, as I informed you on a previous occasion is spreading himself on every opportunity and suggesting that the Board of Education is entirely indifferent to the matter'.[95] Benjamin Broadbent, alderman and sometime mayor of his native Huddersfield was by 1910 a veteran figure in the infant welfare movement in which he had been active since 1905 writing, speaking, visiting centres and attending conferences at home and abroad.

The Memorandum as it finally emerged was closely geared to what should be possible in the schools.[96] While noticeably free from eugenist and social-Darwinist formulations it inevitably, given the subject matter, laid the usual heavy stress on domestic and maternal responsibility for infant survival and young child health. Part of the opening paragraph read

> It cannot be doubted that in directly preventing the deaths of infants and in contributing to the healthy rearing and upbringing of

93 PRO ED/11/51 Letters exchanged between Runciman and Morant, 1-3 March 1909, together with five draft revisions of the Memorandum dated between 5 August and 11 November 1910.

94 C. Addison MD MP, Politics from Within 1911-1918 (London 1924) Vol.1, 18-19.

95 PRO ED/11/51 Letter signed HMG to Runciman, 24 October 1910.

96 Infant Care Memorandum, I, Introductory Statement.

> young children, *few factors are likely to be more important* than the education and training of elder girls in public elementary schools in the science and practice of infant care and management'. (my italics. D. St J.)

That the Board should have given its considered authority to this remarkable statement is evidence of how deeply the theory of maternal responsibility had taken root, unless indeed it should be seen merely as a piece of cynical special pleading. Public health considerations were briefly dismissed. 'Now while it is true that external sanitary conditions exert an injurious effect, it will be found in practice that a high infant mortality rate depends in great measure upon the conditions of the domestic surrounding'.[97] Practical matters dealt with in the Memorandum included evaluation and criticism of existing schemes in schools, detailed suggestions for syllabuses, choice of location for classes, the relation of school classes to local infant welfare provision, to pupils' home circumstances and to the study of domestic subjects. It was however far more than a merely practical document. The emphasis throughout was on the need to train the instincts and to involve the emotions of girls in the direction of their future maternal function. Some of Morant's introductory words made this clear.

> The ultimate aim of a state system of education given to girls in the public elementary schools should be to equip them in the best possible way for the duties which will fall to them in after life. What is commonly called book-learning has in past years been too much regarded as the supreme purpose of our elementary schools, and it is beginning to be widely realised that the teaching being given in these schools might with advantage be made more practical in certain directions, and that it might, especially in the case of the older girls, be definitely directed towards arousing interest in and increasing the knowledge of the ordinary routine of domestic hygiene including infant care ... remembering always that the training should be of a twofold nature namely a training in domesticity and a training in infant care, and that it must be designed not to replace but to stimulate and encourage teaching by the mother in the home.[98]

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97 Infant Care Memorandum, I, *op.cit.*

98 *Ibid.*, Prefatory statement by Sir Robert Morant.

There was a narrowing of focus in this statement contrasting chillingly with the definition of the purpose of the public elementary school given five years earlier in the Board's Suggestions where stress was laid on 'education in the full sense of the word' and the teacher given 'the high function ... to prepare the child for the life of a good citizen, to create and foster the aptitude for work and for the intelligent use of leisure'.[99] Morant's use of the term 'book-learning' was ambiguous. He may have been referring to the by then despised routines of the Revised Code which lingered on where overlarge classes and teacher tradition inhibited their departure, or else to the widened syllabus proposals and more humane approach of the Suggestions. Whichever he had in mind, the 'more practical' directions for girls were likely to involve in brutal reality a re-treading, in more officially approved ways, of family and domestic drudgery. It is important to consider how the Memorandum sought to transform this reality into something of dignity and high purpose.

The emphasis was on integration. On no account must the teaching on infant care 'be attempted as an isolated separate subject' but must be related to and form the final stage of a course on personal and domestic hygiene undertaken ideally in two stages, from seven to eleven years and from twelve to fourteen.[100] In a striking phrase the earlier lessons were spoken of as forming the 'health conscience' of the children, 'and so arousing the desire and ambition to put the principles embodied into practice in their own homes'.[101] Integration was re-emphasised in discussion of teaching. This should above all be carried on in the school, indeed in the familiar classroom, and undertaken by the headmistress or by a class teacher well-known to and trusted by the girls. 'The subject is not an easy one and calls in any case for high qualities of mind and heart.' The teacher in the school, as opposed to the occasional visiting specialist, was not only in touch with mothers but could put the subject in the general

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99 Board of Education, Suggestions *op.cit.*, Introduction (a) 'The Purpose of a Public Elementary School'.

100 Infant Care Memorandum III 'The Principles of Teaching Infant Care and Management'.

101 *Ibid.*, IV 'A Suggested Course for use in Public Elementary Schools'.

context of school work 'and will have many opportunities of reminding the girls that they must not regard their domestic teaching merely as an interesting school lesson, but that they must make use of the knowledge gained in their homes in the years to come'. The personality of the teacher and her relationship with the girls were to be seen as far more important than her technical qualifications for the subject. 'The chief requirement for successful teaching is not an elaborate syllabus but a wise teacher'. It was indeed accepted that finding the right teacher might delay introducing the subject. Given this approach, the use of visiting teachers or nurses as lecturers was considered a poor alternative and visits to day nurseries or crèches should only be additions to the main course. Schools were warned that busy matrons might be tempted to use the girls as drudges.

Involving the girls' 'deeper feelings and instincts' was admitted to be difficult as the use of a baby for class demonstration was likely to be impossible. Large model baby dolls were to be available for schools but might give a certain unreality to the process. There was a firm warning over the use of the doll. 'Any attempt to turn the lessons in this subject into mere make-believe or to give them the character of a game, is a psychological and educational mistake'.[102] To emphasise the fundamentally non-pragmatic approach of the Memorandum, it is worth noting that at no point did it make use, as a justification for giving infant care lessons so young, of the extent to which elder girls were responsible for younger siblings. The only argument advanced on age was that once schooldays were over the girls could not be got hold of. By marriage much would have been forgotten but the hope was expressed that eventually continuation schools might be there to fill the gap. Authoritative yet modest and thoughtful in tone, it is not surprising that the Memorandum was well received. Education reproduced it in full with favourable editorial comment,[103] and appreciative mention appeared in The Schoolmistress.[104]

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[102] Infant Care Memorandum V 'General Arrangements for such a Course'.

[103] Education 9 December 1910, 267-270, and 16 December 1910, 383-386.

[104] The Schoolmistress Vol.59, 8 December 1910, 214-215, 219; 22 December 1910, 258; 29 December 1910, 270, 272.

National Health,[105] and The Child. The latter carried articles on the topic in 1911 and 1914 and described examples of good practice.[106] Alderman Broadbent, by 1914 Vice-Chairman of the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, writing in National Health in April of that year described a visit to a Derbyshire school.

> At a school I attended to see the teaching for myself the girls were asked which of their lessons they liked best. Without a moment's hesitation there was a chorus replying "Babies", and when Professor Smithells of the Leeds University rather mischievously put in the query "Whatl better than arithmetic?" the gasp of astonishment that greeted his question was more expressive than any vocal reply could have been'.[107]

References in Sir George Newman's Annual Reports from 1910 to 1914 were optimistic, giving examples and indicating progress in different localities. The entry for 1915 however, was perfunctory and in 1916 deeply pessimistic. Suggesting that local education authorities would do wisely to reconsider the Memorandum (Circular 758), it admitted that very little had been done in the intervening years to introduce the subject into the curriculum of elementary schools 'though in certain areas, owing chiefly to the enterprise of individual headmistresses, courses have been established'. There followed details of good practice in Tottenham, Bradford, Manchester and London, and while elsewhere teaching was satisfactory and practical where it was introduced, local education authorities had done 'almost nothing to encourage the general introduction of this teaching throughout schools in their areas'.[108] This pessimism was confirmed by a former inspector, Miss Beatrice de Normann, reviewing infant welfare teaching in schools at a conference of the Association of Infant Welfare Workers in Bristol in July 1916.

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105 National Health No.26, Vol.3, January 1911, 32.

106 The Child Vol.1, January 1911, 393; Vol.4, February 1914, 348; Vol.5, October 1914, 7-10.

107 B. Broadbent, 'The Past and Future of Infantile Mortality Work' National Health No.61, NS.22, April 1914, 296. Professor Smithells FRS was Chairman of the Science Committee of the Association of Teachers of Domestic Subjects from its inception and a strong advocate of such studies for girls.

108 Annual Report for 1916 of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education [Cd. 8746] 1917, Section VIII, 118-122.

> During the last few years various methods of giving this instruction have been tried and ... I am perfectly aware that some of the experiments have been extremely successful. It is, however, important to realise that the actual percentage of children receiving this instruction is exceedingly small, and that much of it reaches a very low standard of efficiency.

She identified four main areas of criticism : artificial teaching using a doll, and with dogmatic instruction over feeding, so that set tables were taught rather than a good grasp of general principles; out-of-date teaching; lack of proper responsibility for seeing that teaching took place; and overlapping and contradictory advice even for members of the same family.[109]

To re-emphasise belief in maternal responsibility for infant deaths, which underlay pressure for infant welfare classes in school, the Board re-issued in 1916 as Circular 940 the Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report for 1914. A well-known passage in the introduction insisted that 'the habits, customs and practices of the people themselves rather ... than ... external surroundings and conditions' were responsible for the 'injurious influences' affecting young children. 'The environment of the infant is its mother. Its health and physical fitness are dependent primarily upon her health, her capacity in domesticity, and her knowledge of infant care and management.'[110] The Annual Report for 1917 was more optimistic noting a considerable extension of local education authority provision.[111] Whether this was the result of National Baby Week in July 1917 can only be surmised, but in 1918 the Board proposed that the time had come to consider seriously the extension of the subject for thirteen year-olds. Lack of suitable teachers and the need for more time to arrange experimental courses were given as reasons for the delay in further promotion of these courses.[112] The proposal does not seem to have been followed up however.

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109 Report of a Conference of the Association of Infant Welfare Workers in Bristol, 21 July 1916, National Health No.86, NS.46, November 1916, 56-58.

110 Annual Report for 1914 of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education 1915 [Cd.8055] re-issued as Board of Education Circular 940, 1916, Section II, 25.

111 Annual Report for 1917 of the Chief Education Officer of the Board of Education 1918 [Cd.9206] Section I, 13.

112 Annual Report for 1918 of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education 1919 [Cmd.420] Section IX, 155.

and with the passage of the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918 and the establishment of the Ministry of Health in 1919, the Board of Education's responsibility for grants to schools for mothers, in relation to which infant care teaching in schools had previously appeared in the reports, came to an end.

Turning from general government statements to the situation in London there is evidence that, as in some other parts of the country, individual London headmistresses had taken the initiative even before the Authority had given formal approval. A conference called by the LCC Elementary Education sub-Committee in January 1914 was attended by teacher representatives, including domestic subjects' teachers, by representatives of the School Medical Service and of the Board of Education, as well as by inspectors. 'They discussed the Memorandum, examined syllabuses in operation and made recommendations. The tone was positive.

The members of the Conference who had experience in teaching the subject in the schools were unanimous in their opinion that the work in infant care, when taken in a series of lessons as part of the ordinary school curriculum was especially valuable in its effect on the poor type of scholars, one headmistress stating that not only had the girls become intensely interested in the work but the mothers had shown appreciation ... and had visited the classes. The Council had in consequence supplied a nurse and had given a series of six lectures to the mothers after five o'clock in the evening; the result was an absolute change in the character of the girls attending her school.

Evidence was given by another headmistress that of the children present one morning 89 had entire charge of a baby under one year and 16 had to wash, dress and feed baby, taking also entire charge during the mother's illness.[113]

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113 GLRO EO/GEN/6/15 Report to the Elementary Education Sub-Committee of the London County Council of the Conference of Teachers and Officers to consider the general question of the teaching of Hygiene and Infant Care January 1914.

Following this conference the Authority circularised the Board's Memorandum to all girls' and mixed departments and agreed to sanction courses and provide equipment. The work was limited to begin with to those schools already giving lessons and to a maximum of 50 others that had shown interest.[114] Within six months this initiative, modest enough for an Authority with 460 girls' elementary departments, was overtaken by the outbreak of war. It is difficult to piece together how far, amid the pressures of war on the schools, instruction in infant care was likely to find a place as a non-compulsory 'extra' in the curriculum. Neither inspectors' reports nor school log book entries supply much material. As previously mentioned written reports from LCC inspectors were virtually discontinued for the duration from 1915, while the small proportion of log books extant for girls' departments diverge too widely in the topics mentioned for the occasional references to be numerically significant. The Minutes of the LCC Education Committee, drastically shortened in wartime, do not mention the subject after 1914.

While the search for hard evidence of classes may yield little, wartime propaganda for more attention to the craft of motherhood and preparation for the maternal role was fed from several sources, including alarm over the steadily falling birth-rate confirmed by the report of the National Birth-rate Commission in 1916, by the continuing high level of infant mortality, and by the horrifying rate of war casualties. Any headmistress who wished to develop studies in infant care would find no lackof justification for such an undertaking. Authoritative voices were raised on all sides. Dr Mary Scharlieb, influential consultant and public figure in an article on 'The Welfare of the Child as a National Question' wrote in 1916

> From the best available statistics it appears probable that we lose annually more than 100,000 children within the first month of extra-uterine life, and yet this appalling sacrifice of innocents is exceeded by the numbers of children who perish before they have drawn a breath. The fact that the nation is losing more than 200,000 children between the date of conception and the attainment of the

[114] Minutes of the LCC Education Committee 1914, 325-6.

> mature (sic) age of one year is a terrible comment on the ignorance and apathy of all concerned.[115]

Sir James Marchant, Secretary to the National Birth-rate Commission and Director of the National Council of Public Morals in his Cradles and Coffins in the same year suggested that alongside Rolls of Honour for the dead should be 'a Roll of Shame from the bell tower of St. Stephens with the number of infants and mothers who died from preventable causes ... Places of the dead have to be filled. The thousands of empty silent cradles in the land must be set rocking with bright-eyed healthy babies'.[116] From the educational press the Journal of Education for June 1916 in a signed article on 'The War and Girls' Education : One Aspect' asked

> What is the main object of girls' education? A few years ago many educationists would probably have said "to prepare them for earning a living". Today, in spite of the fact that thousands and thousands of girls are forced to enter the industrial struggle, some of the best thinkers now feel that as the conservation of the family is now more than ever woman's supreme task and her most valuable contribution to the nation's welfare she must during her school years be specially prepared for her high calling.[117]

Propaganda and pressure to reduce infant mortality rates and to carry the infant welfare campaign into the schools reached a climax with National Baby Week early in July 1917, a major publicity exercise to rouse consciousness over infant care by publications, local and national events, displays, competitions and the like. The Teacher's World, a publication which normally devoted little space to the teaching of domestic subjects, contributed a double page spread showing the number of babies dying and of young men being killed in one week.[118] The organisers of the Week

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115 M. Scharlieb MD MS, 'The Welfare of the Child as a National Question' Child Welfare Annual 1916, 55. Dr Scharlieb (1844-1930) was Consultant Physician on the diseases of Women at the Royal Free Hospital and Consultant Surgeon at two London Women's Hospitals. She served on the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease and was a prolific writer and speaker on the health of women and girls.

116 J. Marchant, Cradles and Coffins : Our greatest National Need (London 1916) 69.

117 F. B. Low, 'The War and Girls' Education : One Aspect' The Journal of Education June 1916, 329.

118 The Teachers' World 20 June 1917. See illustration *infra*, 135-136.

intended that the schools should be closely involved. The London Teacher reported

> In order to secure a complete connection between the teachers and the National Baby Week Council, Mr. J. Litt the Treasurer of the London Teachers' Association has been co-opted upon the Executive Committee of the Council. Representative teachers named by the Association have been placed upon the local committees in every Metropolitan borough ... the main influence of the school in a matter of this kind is the reaction of its teaching upon the homes of the people.[119]

Schools nationally were encouraged to set pupils writing essays - girls on 'How I mind our baby' and boys on coping with dangers from flies. National Health gave a total of 30,000 essays written, The Child 180,000. National Baby Week records were destroyed in the Second World War, so that it is not possible to trace how many London schools were involved, nor how enthusiastically they took part in the Week's other activities. Out of 116 London school log books for girls' departments there are eleven specific references to the Week, five of which refer to the essay competition. Other references to infant care work in the logs included infant care classes at a domestic subjects centre (Yerbury Road Centre), a rare mention by a District Inspector of mothercraft being 'prominent and well-taught' (Laburnam Street School), and mention of visits by girls to a local school for mothers (Munster Road School).[120] Compared with other activities such as the Shakespeare Tercentenary celebrations in April 1916 the coverage was sparse. Hygiene classes figured regularly in timetables, but without any indication of how far these culminated in infant care classes along the lines suggested in the 1910 Memorandum.

Given the wartime pressures for mothercraft teaching, this apparent lack of enthusiastic progress may simply have been the result of acute difficulties of space or of staff shortage, or may have stemmed from a

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119 The London Teacher 15 June 1917, 305.

120 Yerbury Road School GLRO EO/DIV3/LB/3.
Laburnam Street School GLRO EO/DIV4/LB/5.
Munster Road School GLRO EO/DIV1/LB/8.

difficulties of space or of staff shortage, or may have stemmed from a desire on the part of some headmistresses not to subject their older girls to a repetition of the narrow domestic round which bore so heavily on many of them. Sending groups of girls to day nurseries was one solution, but as already noted they might be overworked by busy matrons, and the concern of headmistresses for the health of the girls is manifest in the log books. Swimming as a healthy exercise was widely encouraged, parties taken out on visits throughout the war, rest in school allowed after the fatigues of night air-raids and concern often expressed at the long hours spent in food queues in 1918. A few headmistresses are on record as taking infant care tuition with the utmost seriousness, notably Mrs Truelove of Montem Street school in North London whose work was quoted widely as an example of excellent practice,[121] but, admittedly on largely negative evidence, it does appear that many heads did not find it a matter of first concern. It is worth recalling the memorandum from the London Head Teachers' Association in 1920 relating to the teaching of domestic subjects

> these subjects interfere unduly with the successful working of the curriculum, cutting into the time which should be given to the teaching of Literature, History and Geography, at a time (12 to 14 years) when a broad, general and humane education should be given.[122]

The effect on girls' health of their more housebound and overworked lives was also a matter for concern to the Schools Medical Officer for the LCC who drew attention during and just after the war to the prevalence among girls over eight years old of spinal curvature, heart trouble and anaemia, commenting in a surprisingly lyrical vein

> There can be no doubt that the effect is due to the denial of opportunities to the girls, which are open to the boys, for participation in outdoor games and sports. "She grows as a flower grows", she will "wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath as a narcissus will if you do not give her air enough".

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121 Annual Report for 1916 [Cd.8746] *op.cit.*, Section VIII, 118. See also Child Study Vol.13, No.1, July 1920, 9-10 for a report on the work at Montem Street.

122 GLRO EO/FHE/1/109 Also quoted in Chapter III i *supra*.

This was re-emphasised in the following year's report when household drudgery was held to account 'in no small measure for the more unhealthy condition of the girls generally as compared with boys on leaving school'.[123]

The Memorandum of 1910 was revised and re-issued in 1925 as Board of Education Circular 1353. From the surrounding comment and circumstances it appears that a shift in opinion had taken place towards more emphasis on girls visiting day nurseries rather than on classes being held in school. It is notable that the impetus for revision came from the National League for Health, Maternity and Child Welfare of which Dr Eric Pritchard, a leading figure in infant welfare work before and during the war, was Joint Honorary Secretary. The League, an umbrella organisation,[124] sent in June 1923 a strong deputation to the Board of Education met by Lord Onslow, representing the Minister. A briefing note, requested by the Minister, listed points Board officials thought likely to be raised by the deputation. These included the preparation of a syllabus for use in schools, attention to the training of teachers in the subject, extension of the tuition to secondary schools, and closer involvement of local organisations and personnel.[125] Another internal unsigned Minute listed the variety of those involved in the schools, in domestic subjects centres, and in infant welfare centres and continued

> The women inspectors think that as a rule the lessons given by the qualified nurse or by the older Domestic Subjects' teachers or by a married teacher in the PES (sic) are the most valuable. Headmistresses who are interested in the subject also do it well. Experience seems to show however that young teachers, either of Domestic Subjects or class teachers, however well-trained in theory are generally unwilling to undertake the work and do not do it well. In my opinion it would be better if the Board wish to give any definite encouragement to the teaching of Mothercraft to ask LEAs to

123 Report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Schools Medical Officer for 1918 Part II, 1919, 28.

124 The League involved seven welfare bodies, six English and one Irish. These included the National Baby Week Council, the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality, the National League for Physical Education and the National Society of Day Nurseries.

125 PRO ED/11/150 Memorandum 5 June 1923.

> give courses of instruction to some of their older teachers who already feel the need for this work, than to make it compulsory for the ordinary young teacher in training colleges.[126]

In view of its composition it was not surprising that the deputation, which met Lord Onslow in June 1923, came out strongly in favour of visits to infant welfare centres and day nurseries rather than of lectures or even school classes. The opening speaker, Lady Helmsley of the National Society of Day Nurseries, struck a note unlikely to appeal to headmistresses when she urged the Board to cut out some of the advanced subjects from the curriculum so as to be able 'to give the girls a real training in mothercraft during their last six months at school'.[127] Following the deputation an unsigned paper of comment and of commendation of work being done, while mentioning teaching in schools, laid the main emphasis on work through infant welfare agencies

> I think we may say that it is a matter in which circumstances alter cases, more perhaps than any other branch of teaching in the schools. ... It is for the local education authority and the local Day Nurseries and Infant Welfare Centres to co-operate and carry out this course of instruction in accordance with the district in which it is proposed to work.[128]

Later, in 1923, the chief woman inspector, Miss A. E. Wark, sought the advice of other women inspectors on a re-issue of Circular 758 asking particularly for information on co-operation in their areas with local centres and nurseries.[129] The revised version eventually appeared early in 1925 once again under Dr Janet Campbell's signature. The Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education, L. A. Selby-Bigge, confirmed in a prefatory note that the Board did not contemplate compulsion nor the issue of formal syllabuses. The 'wholehearted approval and goodwill of the school staff' was considered as essential for the running of successful courses. Much of

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126 PRO ED/11/150 *op.cit.*, Minute to Sir E. B. Phipps, 2 June 1923.
127 *Ibid.*, Report of the Deputation.
128 *Ibid.*, Unsigned document of comment on the issue.
129 *Ibid.*, Letter from Miss A. E. Wark, 18 September 1923.

the material in the Circular was similar to that of 1910 but with more stress laid on teaching outside the classroom and on co-operation with local health authorities. The advantage of familiarising the girls with the centres to which their own babies could be taken in due course, was pointed out.[130]

The principal change from Circular 758 lay in the proposal to extend such classes to the secondary schools. This was in line with the 1923 report on curricular differentiation between the sexes in which infant care had been briefly mentioned in relation to domestic studies and hygiene.[131] The proposals in Circular 1353 were modest, suggesting short intensive courses of six to twelve weeks possibly as part of a hygiene and housecraft course with less attention to precise details of baby care than was given to elementary schoolgirls. The difficulty of approaching such details without arousing self-consciousness in sixteen to seventeen year-olds was given as a reason for this change in emphasis.

A long and highly critical response to the Circular appeared in The Times Education Supplement under the heading 'Faults in Girls' Education : The Celibate Ideal'. It attacked the proposed organisation of classes which were seen as failing to inculcate throughout school life 'the idea of the responsibility of the older for the younger'. The Board's hope that married women teachers with children of their own would be able to take classes was shrugged off with contempt, the writer asking in how many districts local authorities now countenanced the employment of married women teachers? 'And in how many girls' secondary schools are any of the teachers married or chosen for any experience of life except what they have gained in celibate institutions - training colleges, or the women's colleges of the universities?'[132] Lessons in school moreover would in the

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130 Board of Education Circular 1353 The Teaching of Infant Care and Mangement to Schoolgirls 1925.

131 Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Differentiation between the Sexes in Secondary Schools 1923, Chapter II, 53.

132 The LCC Education Committee decided in February 1923, after a long and hotly contested debate, that teachers appointed from then on would be required to resign on marriage, apart from a few clearly defined categories. Minutes of the Education Committee, 23 February 1923, 54-55.

absence of sufficient day nurseries or infant welfare centres lack the practical follow-up that many elementary schoolgirls gained at home.

> as a matter of fact the girl in an elementary school is often morally better-off than her more prosperous sisters, in that a part of the mothering of her brothers and sisters - sometimes too much - falls to her share. When it falls to the lot of the secondary schoolgirl it is almost always too much for her, for after school hours she has to do home lessons often after a long journey by train ... The Board of Education must realise that the value of the teaching will be almost *nil* unless there is an opportunity given for its application. The elementary schoolgirl often gets it at home. It is the secondary schoolgirl for whom facilities should be provided.

The main thrust of the criticism however attacked secondary education for girls as essentially self-centred and thus contrary to the needs of her future. A homely illustration was invoked.

> Every housewife is four-footed with four socks to darn instead of two; every child adds two socks and the socks are symbolical of the increasing range of all her responsibilities. Yet the education we give the girl is for herself alone, for her own edification, her own amusement; in the formative impressionable time of her life she has, for years, little training for service; little strengthening of her muscles and mental fibre for the burden of responsibility that the years will bring.[133]

However much alarm over infant mortality rates may have stimulated the demand for infant care teaching in the past, belief in its power to direct the emotions of girls towards motherhood had always been a factor. By the post-war years this appeared as the dominant reason for its inclusion in the curriculum. From both points of view it had attracted some criticism. Throughout the fifteen years that elapsed between the two circulars overt opposition was rare and when it emerged tended to reflect in a more muted form the criticisms directed at domestic subjects' teaching. It was less of a target than the latter as its relevance was more obviously to the

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133 Times Educational Supplement 21 March 1925, 113.

girls' homes and it was thus virtually free from the suspicion that clung to domestic subjects' teaching, in spite of all disclaimers, that its real object was to ensure a supply of servants. Criticism that teaching was given too young was easily met by reference to girls' duties at home and the inescapable fact that most school leavers could not be reached through clubs, continuation classes or any other agency. There were however critics who attacked head-on the prevailing view that infant mortality rates could best be lowered by the education of mothers and of their daughters at school. Dr William Brend, lecturer in forensic medicine at Charing Cross Hospital was a most significant voice among such critics. In his Health and the State he reviewed the whole range of causes advanced for infant deaths and noted that 'In general ... each investigator tends to regard as the most potent that evil which is most often or most strongly brought under his notice'. Thus he found the gynaecologist most likely to blame pre-natal influences, syphilis, malnutrition etc., the temperance reformer alcoholism, and the educationist maternal ignorance. 'Measures for the dispelling of maternal ignorance' he wrote 'form the basis of the modern campaign which has led to the Notification of Births Act, the establishment of schools for mothers and classes in "mothercraft" for girls.' Brend's firm conclusion was that the overwhelming cause of high infant mortality rates in towns was atmospheric pollution. He was among those angered by attacks on the mothers. After detailing a number of examples of appalling London poverty he concluded 'under these circumstances the glib statements regarding maternal ignorance appear to the writer intolerable'.[134]

An attack in more radical terms appeared in a symposium Women and the Labour Party edited by Dr Marion Phillips and including chapters by prominent Labour women, Mary McArthur, Margaret Llewellyn Davies, Beatrice Webb, Margaret Bondfield, Susan Lawrence and also Rebecca West who wrote in her chapter 'Women as Brainworkers'

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134 W. Brend MD, Health and the State (London 1917) 70-71. Brend used examples from Dr Wanklyn's 'Working-class Home Conditions in London' Transactions of the Royal Society of Medicine 1913, and from work done by Dr A. Slater in Bermondsey.

> It is a matter of enormous significance that every year Sir George Newman includes in his annual report made as medical officer to the Board of Education the infamous assertion that infant mortality is chiefly due to maternal ignorance, and urges that more time be given in schools to the teaching of "mothercraft" and domestic subjects ... the statement is part of a campaign to deprive the lower classes of education "that will only unsettle them" and to train them to be useful servants and ignorant wives and mothers. There must of course be instruction in mothercraft in the ideal girls' school, but like all vocational training it must be subordinate to a sound general education, which will allow every human being ... to show whatever capacity he or she possesses.[135]

Experience of the good effects on health of regular wartime separation allowances and of higher wages for working mothers had strengthened the argument that poverty rather than ignorance lay at the root of the problem. Eleanor Rathbone in her campaign for family endowment was among those deeply concerned with the relative poverty of the mother within the family as a major factor in deprivation and ill-health for mothers and children. In her closely argued case for the endowment of mothers she referred to the tendency of infant welfare propaganda to overestimate the educational side of the problem and to underestimate the economic. 'We have now' she wrote 'an elaborate machinery of pre-natal and post-natal clinics, health visitors and domestic science teachers, designed to supplement the meagre and half-forgotten information given to little girls in school.'[136] The events of 1923-1925 proved however that isolated critics were of little account when confronted by the well-organised battalions of the infant welfare movement, backed by the re-asserted authority of the Board of Education. It is only surprising that compulsion was not introduced. How far this was due to a realisation that headmistresses and class teachers were not, with few exceptions, wholeheartedly in favour of promoting class-room teaching of infant welfare is a matter for further investigation. On the basis of admittedly attenuated evidence there is a case for suggesting a reluctance to make

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135 R. West in M. Phillips (ed.), Women and the Labour Party (London 1918) 61-62.

136 E. Rathbone, The Disinherited Family (London 1924) 64.

these studies a serious priority and of wishing to leave them as far as possible to domestic studies lessons and outside welfare agencies. It is worth noting that in 1925 Sir Michael Sadler was among the judges in a competition organised by The Daily Mail for the best elementary school curriculum. The women's prize for a girls' school curriculum was won by a Derbyshire teacher who advocated for Mothercraft teaching the making of arrangements with the local welfare centre and health visitor. A small crèche as a training ground was advocated as a useful addition.[137]

In the following chapter, concerned with the moral education of girls, a possible additional factor in the reluctance to hold infant welfare classes in school is discussed - the fear that these might lead to interest and questioning by girls as to childbirth and sex relations.

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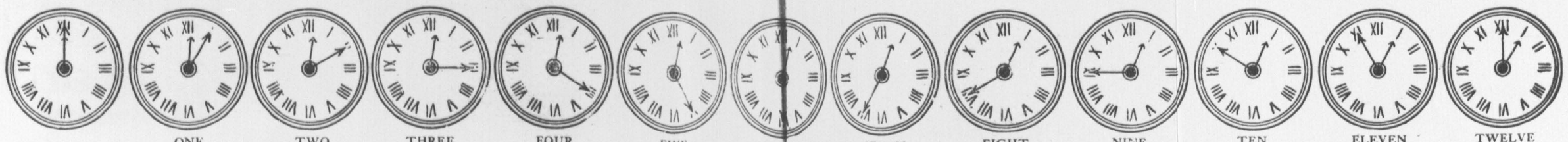
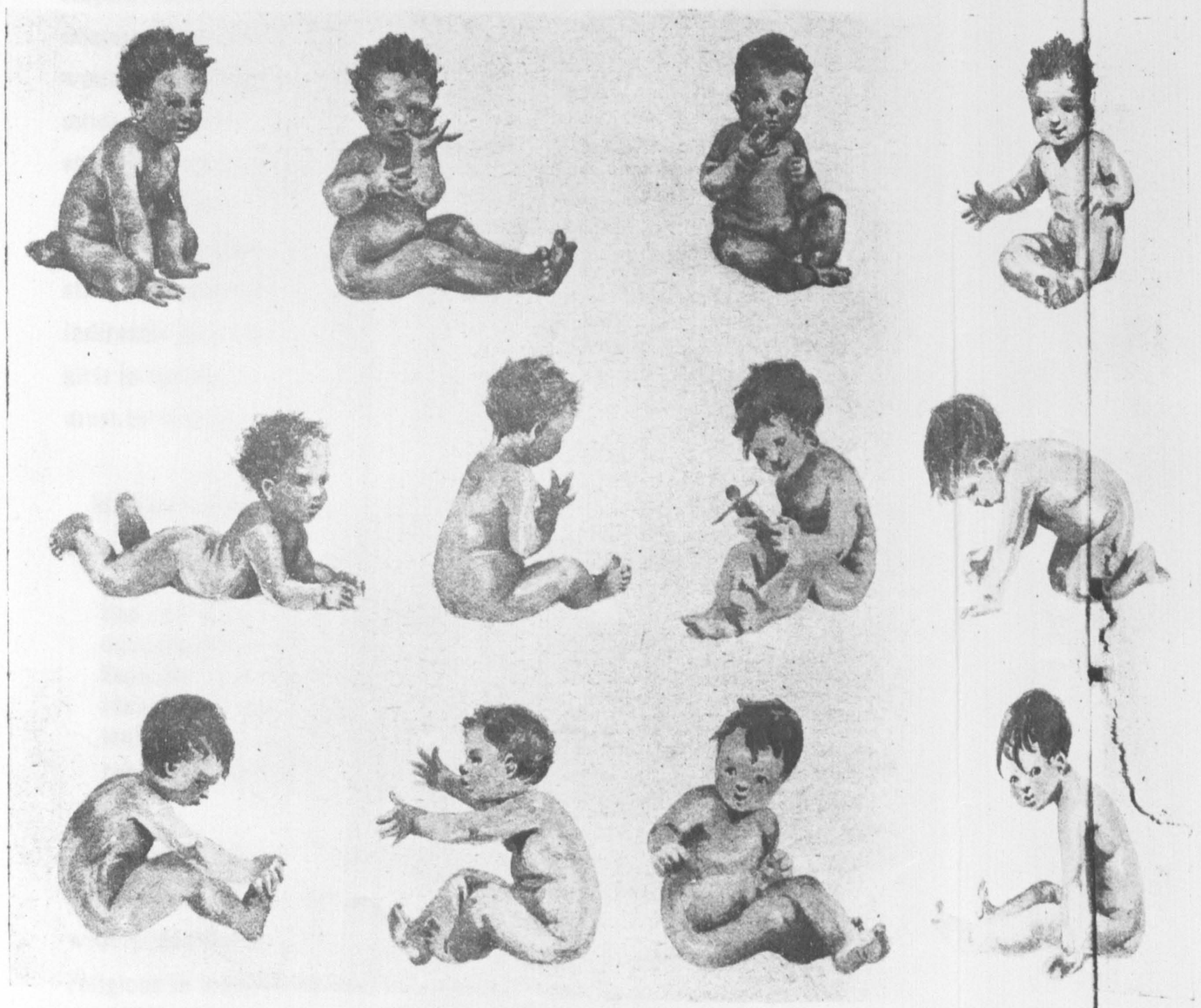
137 M. Sadler, Our Public Elementary Schools (London 1926) 72-74. Sir Michael Sadler was at this time Master of University College Oxford.

MORE BABIES DIE AT HOME THAN SOLDIERS ON THE BATTLEFIELD

SOMEWHERE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM A BABY DIES EVERY FIVE MINUTES. LET EVERY SCHOOL HELP THE NATIONAL BABY WEEK SO THAT THOUSANDS OF THESE LITTLE ONES MAY BE SAVED





During one year of the Great War **twelve** British babies living at home died every hour. More than one half of these precious lives might have been saved.

During the same year **nine** British soldiers died every hour out of the millions exposed to the dangers of the battlefield.

DO YOUR VERY BEST TO MAKE NATIONAL BABY WEEK A SUCCESS

IV Moral Education

i Varying approaches to the teaching of morals, and the controversy over sex education

Implicit, and at times explicit, in much of the discussion and comment on domestic and mothercraft training for girls, was the assumption that it would benefit their morals and foster higher standards of purity and modesty. Quite apart however from these studies which, as indicated above, frequently took place off the school premises and outside the regular teachers' immediate influence, schools at all levels in the early twentieth century were under considerable pressure, though stopping short of compulsion, to introduce some form of moral instruction directly or indirectly into the curriculum. Before considering the application of this to girls in the elementary schools the origins and directions of this pressure must be briefly considered as well as the conflicts within it.

Michael Sadler in the Introduction to the major report on the subject edited by him in 1908 wrote

> The old question of moral education is at the heart of the modern educational problem. If this is neglected education is in peril. Economic and social changes, the inrush of new knowledge and new ideas, the weakening of ancient traditions, the shifting of old landmarks of custom and belief have thrown upon the schools a responsibility beyond precedent and expectation.[1]

The self-conscious attempt to inculcate moral virtue among both adults and children had dual origins in the later nineteenth century. The widespread Purity movement taking shape from about the 1870s was religious in inspiration and involved organisations which included the

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1 M. E. Sadler (ed.), Moral Instruction and Training in Schools. Report of an International Inquiry Vol.1, 'The United Kingdom' (London 1908).

White Cross League (1883), the Mothers' Union (1885), the Girls' Friendly Society (1874), the Moral Reform Union (1882), and the Church of England Young Men's Society (1900). In a recent study J. S. Watson speaks of the movement as 'initiating most of the early ventures into mass sex education' though she acknowledges the difficulty of assessing, apart from noting the number of editions, how widely the movement's numerous publications were read, and the impossibility of quantifying the scale of sex education in schools.[2] Important for such education was the insistence, within the Purity movement, on equal standards of moral behaviour for men and women. Ellice Hopkins, founder of the White Cross League had a profound admiration for the work of Josephine Butler,[3] though repressive methods and attitudes developed within the Purity movement far removed from Mrs Butler's passionate sympathy for the outcast and oppressed. 'Social purity came to mean the legal repression of prostitutes and the harassing of serious writers, their publishers and popular entertainers.'[4]

The other major organisation behind the drive for moral education had little in common with the Purity movement . The Moral Instruction League, founded in 1897 developed from the secular Ethical Society. The League campaigned for moral teaching which should make no appeal to supernatural or superhuman motives, and directed its first efforts towards the London School Board, extending this later to the post-1902 new local education authorities.[5] The League could claim credit for the brief mention of 'good moral training' in the Board of Education Suggestions of 1905, and for the more explicit addition to the Board's Code in 1906.

> Moral instruction should form an important part of every elementary school curriculum. Such instruction may either be (i)

2 J. S. Watson, The Role of the Purity Movement in the Development of Sex Education for Young People 1850-1914 Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, London 1978.

3 Rosa Barrett, Ellice Hopkins. A Memoir (London 1907).

4 E. J. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance : Purity Movements in Britain since 1700 (Dublin 1977) Part 2. 5, 7.

5 R. J. W. Selleck, The New Education (London and Melbourne 1968) 304-312.

> incidental, occasional, and given as a fitting opportunity arises in the ordinary course of lessons or (ii) be given systematically and as a course of graduated instruction.[6]

The League's drive to elevate social, civic and patriotic motivation for moral conduct, as against the religious, was strengthened by the shortcomings of Religious Instruction programmes. Dr F. H. Hayward wrote in 1902 in The Reform of Moral and Biblical Education

> Is there a single 'Scripture syllabus' issued by any school board in Britain which shows the faintest knowledge of modern scholarship? ... Our systems of moral and biblical instruction are almost entirely stupid. They are a hundred years behind the time. They seem untouched by educational progress. Above all they are clearly ineffective.

He preferred biblical teaching but if the stagnation were to continue would advocate 'a totally new start on the lines of the Moral Instruction League'.[7]

F. J. Gould, the prominent agnostic, a member of the League and a prolific writer for adults and children on moral education, wrote a brief history of the movement in his Moral Education (1929). He deplored the fact that such education was still not compulsory, listing the necessary moral qualities as discipline, industry, self-control, duty, respect for others, corporate loyalty and patriotism. He noted that the President of the Board of Education, while refusing in 1906 to consider compulsory teaching, went so far as to state in the House "I do not for a moment think that morality can only be taught on a theological basis". Gould regretted that the Board's Code was more cautious, insisting that 'the scope of the lessons (in moral instruction) should be carefully defined in order to guard against doing or expressing anything in the least subversive of the authority of religion'.[8]

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6 Board of Education, Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools [Cd.3043] 1906.

7 F. H. Hayward, The Reform of Moral and Biblical Education (London 1902) 11, 21-23.

8 F. J. Gould, Moral Education (London 1929) 8. The League's name was changed in 1909 from the 'Moral Instruction League' to the 'Moral Education League'.

The Board's caution reflected, whether consciously or not, attitudes widespread within the schools. Some evidence for this comes from the Sadler Report of 1908 in Alice Ravenhill's chapter on Moral Instruction and Training in Girls' Elementary schools in England.[9] She drew evidence from schools in London, East Anglia, the North East Coast, the West Riding, Lancashire, the Midlands, the West of England, and the South East Coast, the sample including council schools and denominational - Church of England, Catholic, Wesleyan and Jewish. She concluded 'With remarkable unanimity teachers volunteered their conviction that the root of all morality lies in religion and that to divorce the one from the other is impossible'. The value of this evidence is much weakened because she does not indicate how high a proportion of the total were council schools from which, if at all, a contrary opinion might be expected, though a further comment appears to relate to the non-denominational sector : 'The restrictions imposed on religious teaching are keenly felt. Under some authorities any reference to religious motives is forbidden after 9.30am'. She does add that a religious basis for moral teaching was not without its problems as 'religious teachings often lead to confusion between moral codes sanctioned in the Old Testament and those of today'. In the Appendix to her chapter, notes are given from interviews with Heads questioned on moral tone and moral teaching in their schools, in which she observed 'a strong feeling that a religious basis for moral teaching was essential if any effect was to be had on conduct'.[10]

Also in the 1908 Report Arthur Burrell, Principal of the Borough Road Training College in Isleworth Middlesex, collected and summarised teacher opinion on moral instruction noting a generally strong emphasis on the need for a religious basis. In his list of conclusions he noted 'Unwillingness to forego religious sanction. Many teachers will admit of no other. Ethical

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9 A. Ravenhill was author of Lessons in Practical Hygiene for use in Schools (London 1907), Some Characteristics and Requirements of Childhood (London 1908), Household Foes : A Book for Boys and Girls (London 1910).

10 A. Ravenhill, 'Moral Instruction and Training in Girls' Elementary Schools in England' in Sadler, *op.cit.*, 256-294.

systems were "too cold for school work"'. He mentioned nevertheless the existence 'of a small but militant minority of both men and women (teachers) who would gladly part from a religious sanction altogether and substitute a reasoned scheme of utilitarian or evolutionary ethics and a definite syllabus of lessons to be given directly'.[11]

Dr Hayward dealt with the religious versus secular arguments with characteristic robustness.

> Three kinds of moral sanctions are commonly recognised, the religious, the social, civic or patriotic, and the personal or prudential. There seems no reason why all these should not be frankly admitted. They are all admitted in the university classroom of the professor of ethics, and there is no reason why they should not be equally admitted in the classroom of the teacher.[12]

Moral Instruction League enthusiasts tended to be in favour of direct teaching as opposed to the *osmosis* of imbibing moral standards indirectly through the general good atmosphere of the school or through other school subjects, particularly literature, history and of course religious instruction. Indirect instruction was preferred by head teachers interviewed in the Ravenhill survey, though there was agreement that both methods could be employed. Ravenhill pointed out a particular difficulty in gauging what really went on in the schools

> It is advisable to bear in mind how much is to be learned on the conditions, methods, possibilities or results of moral training from the great army of elementary school teachers of which the rank and file are slow to articulate their experience or to publish their practical knowledge. This inquiry has but strengthened the writer's previous impressions of the patient labour devoted by the profession to the cause of moral education.[13]

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11 A. Burrell, 'Some Teachers' Opinions on Moral Instruction and Training' in Sadler, *op.cit.*, 295-6.

12 F. H. Hayward, 'The Need for Improved Moral Instruction' in Sadler, *ibid.*, 21.

13 Ravenhill, *op.cit.*, 275.

Appreciative comments in inspectors' reports on the general moral influence of women teachers on girls bear out this view,[14] but the evidence is piecemeal and often contradictory, varying from over-optimism to deep pessimism, as for example in the final comment of Burrell's survey mentioned above 'There seems to be hardly any direct systematic work done, apart from religious and Bible sessions (often perfunctory and unsatisfactory)'.[15]

F. H. Hayward who favoured direct teaching, saw as one obstacle a much exaggerated fear of encouraging priggishness, the horror of which 'is doing much to prevent schools from exerting their legitimate influence on moral conduct'.[16] Ravenhill's survey shows evidence of this, quoting comments against setting compositions for girls on moral subjects which could merely encourage a trotting-out of opinions known to be pleasing to the teacher.[17] Miss Graveson, vice-principal of Goldsmith's College, warned against the danger of moral lessons that could dig up the roots of children's thoughts before they were really settled : 'they (the children) are so exceedingly docile that they are ready to say anything ... With a beguiling sort of manner you can get any answer you want. That would be dangerous in moral teaching'.[18] Another serious warning came from J. J. Findlay, Professor of Education at Manchester University and a major contributor to current educational debate. In a striking phrase he referred to children's instinctive disgust and even hatred for 'the meddlesome moral fingering of adults anxious to manage, to control, to play the part of deities to their inferiors' and warned against the gulf between moral precepts and children's lives.

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14 For example PRO ED/21/11456 HMI Report Star Lane School, Fulham, 1909; *idem.*, ED/21/12047 Weston Road School Southwark, 1909; LCC District Inspector's Report Jessop Road School Norwood GLRO EO/DIV8/JES/LB/2, 1913.

15 Burrell, *op.cit.*, 296.

16 Hayward, *op.cit.*, 10-12.

17 Ravenhill, *op.cit.*, 294.

18 Miss Graveson, 'The Preparation of Teachers for the Work of Moral Instruction and Training in Schools' Sadler, *op.cit.*, 361.

You may crowd the bairns into unhealthy classrooms depriving them of fresh air and free play, while you teach them the laws of hygiene and pretty behaviour. They will forget your lessons but may remember more than you meant them to do. If a public authority should crowd its labouring classes into slums, but prescribe lessons to their children on the science of dirt what wonder if these children recall in later life some words about those "who devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers".[19]

His references to hygiene and the "science of dirt" in this context are reminders of how closely and frequently the pursuit of cleanliness and neatness was related by teachers, inspectors and others to moral improvement, particularly for girls.

Controversy over moral sanctions and methods of teaching were however of much less importance when compared with the often intense debate in the years before the war over the advisability, methods and content of sex education. As previously mentioned the Purity movement was, albeit in a highly euphemistic and guarded manner, involved in this. Watson remarks on the attitude of mothers being seen as crucial in establishing restraints needed to maintain girls' purity, and that the 'potential of schools, youth and other organisations as surrogate parents in matters of sex education were also recognised', but her conclusion is that as regards working-class girls before 1914 the only aim seems to have been 'to encourage sexual ignorance, and to create an atmosphere of shame and prudery towards sex and body functions'.[20] In the years before and during the war the spread of eugenics propaganda, increasing alarm at the incidence of venereal disease, the influence of feminism and to a lesser extent moralists' concern over the effects of the cinema on working-class boys and girls were all factors that emerged in the arguments for and against more realistic sex instruction in schools, including the elementary. The problems facing any advance were formidable, not least that which Dr Saleeby described as 'the accursed and damnable prudery which

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19 J. J. Findlay, 'The Growth of Moral Ideas in Children' in Sadler, *op.cit.*, 28-30.

20 Watson, *op.cit.*, Chapter 7; and see Bristow, *op.cit.*, 126-131.

everywhere blasts human life'.[21] He was here referring to boys' education in sex, but for girls the convention that ignorance and innocence would help to maintain modesty and purity was even more strongly rooted.

Before considering the arguments in more detail in relation to the elementary schoolgirl it is worth noting how closely the matter approached that supposed temple and shrine of her purity - instruction in mothercraft. The line between infant care and the facts of pregnancy and birth was a fine one, and Ravenhill's Report in 1908 mentioned that 'the remark was not uncommon (from teachers) that lessons in the physical care of infants should be supplemented by judicious teaching upon the ante-natal as well as the post-natal conditions by which children are permanently influenced'.[22] It is possible on the other hand that the lack of enthusiasm mentioned in the previous section for the holding of mothercraft classes in school arose partly from the fear that it would stimulate girls' interest in sex. Dr Saleeby, writing in 1912 explicitly blamed 'prudery' for lack of school attention to infant care,[23] but a conflicting view appeared in The Child for 1914. The influential Alderman Broadbent was quoted, detailing methods in use to educate mothers, and adding what seems to have been meant as a reassuring statement, 'In some elementary schools the upper classes of girls are being given teaching in domestic duties and the care of babies without, it may be noted, anything in the way of sex instruction.'[24] It is possible, though as yet only a surmise, that an anonymous hand-written comment on the papers relating to the 1923 deputation to the Board on Infant Welfare, mentioning 'covert' opposition to infant welfare classes in Catholic schools, may relate to the same anxieties.[25]

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21 C. W. Saleeby, Health, Strength and Happiness 3rd edition (London 1913) 381.

22 Ravenhill, *op.cit.*, 263.

23 C. W. Saleeby, Woman and Womanhood (London 1912) 137.

24 The Child Vol.4, No.10, July 1914, 857. Unsigned article. Alderman Benjamin Broadbent was at this time Vice-chairman of the National Association for the Prevention of Infant Mortality.

25 PRO ED/11/150 Infant Care and Management Note on correspondence, 2 June 1923.

The clearest indication that some teachers grasped the opportunity to make a connection between at least the processes of birth and of infant care comes from evidence given soon after the war to the National Birth-rate Commission by Norah March. Already mentioned in relation to National Baby Week,[26] she was at that time a lecturer in the London County Council Clapham Day Training College, and prominent in the movement for sex education.

> I have known of teachers of mothercraft classes who have taken an opportunity of associating sex teaching with their mothercraft lessons in a perfectly nice and incidental way. For instance when they are taking a lesson on the care of the baby, it is easy for them to say "of course you know the care of the baby begins a long time before baby is born". Here the girls look up in wonder. "And for nine months the mother is taking care of baby in her body." And the teacher gets onto the subject of ante-natal care and it all works well in the hands of a skilful teacher.[27]

The attempt to achieve even the most moderate level of sex education within elementary and secondary schools was led by some medical men and women and by certain eugenists - the groups sometimes overlapping - with Dr Saleeby and Norah March among the most dedicated exponents. Teachers and local education authorities were, with some exceptions, far more cautious, and it was of course on the latter that the final decision of what should be allowed in the schools would depend. Pressure was building up in the years 1912-1914 and a brief examination of certain major statements in these years will show some of the directions taken by informed and influential opinion immediately before the war.

In 1912 Dr Eric Pritchard, paediatrician and frequent contributor to the current debate on infant mortality, gave a forthright statement at a conference of the Child Study Society. He pointed out that the United Kingdom lagged behind expert international opinion. The question of sex

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26 See *supra.*, III ii, n.88.

27 Youth and the Race Fourth Report of and Chief Evidence taken by the National Birth-rate Commission 1920-1923 (London 1923) Part II, 1 October 1920, 41.

education was no longer 'whether' but 'how, when and where'. He saw the movement as greatly influenced by Freud on the power and early manifestation of the sex instinct, and was in favour of instruction by doctors rather than trying to involve the mothers. It was essential to be concerned with *all* children. 'The narrow conception of the sphere and usefulness of sexual pedagogy must be banished from our minds ... We have not to consider the half-million children of the upper classes, but the six million children of the proletariat'. Pritchard suggested the formation of societies for debate and discussion between parents and teachers; lectures for teachers in training; and, to begin with, the confining of the teaching to adolescents. Instruction of younger children could be left until the technical difficulties were better understood.[28]

In the same year Saleeby strongly attacked prudery in language relating to sex, and suggested suitable alternatives to get round existing taboos. 'Parenthood' could replace the unacceptable 'reproduction'; 'expectant mother' take the place of 'pregnancy', and as a good eugenist he proposed 'racial' for 'sexual'. Even the phrase "reproductive instinct" would not pass Mrs Grundy, who while she 'can tolerate the idea of parenthood, reproduction she cannot away with'. He continued

> We must not begin by granting Mrs Grundy's case in any degree. Somewhere in that chaos of prejudices she calls her mind she nourishes the notion that there is something about sex and parenthood which is inherently base and unclean ... This notion ... is to be condemned not merely as a lie ... but as a pernicious lie.[29]

In 1913 the Eugenics Education Society held a conference in London on the teaching of eugenics in schools. Over nine hundred applications from head teachers were received, a degree of interest which led the President of the Society, Major Leonard Darwin, to comment worriedly on the

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28 E. Pritchard, 'The Instruction of the Young in Sexual Hygiene', paper read at the Conference of the Child Study Society, London May 1912 and reported in Child Study Vol.5, No.2, July 1912.

29 Saleeby, *op.cit.*, 141-2, 147. 'Mrs Grundy' was a symbolic figure typifying repressive sexual morality. She was a character in the play of 1798 'Speed the Plough' by Thomas Morton.

confusion that appeared to exist between eugenics and sex hygiene as being identical 'which certainly they are not'. In the area of elementary schools three contributions were most important. W. A. Nicholls, an ex-president of the National Union of Teachers, spoke on the difficulties of introducing the subject into these schools. He regarded the problems as insuperable for 'The serious difficulty is that not only public opinion but many Education Authorities would view with reprehension any attempt to explain in the most elementary way the question of sex'. The parent would have to be the final arbiter and certainly coming to close quarters with the matter in a way the Eugenists would consider necessary would in his view be 'irreconcilable with a collective system of teaching'.

In the discussion Dr Christine Murrell spoke as one who had for several years been giving simple lectures to women teachers in the London service. She agreed with Nicholls that class teaching was unsuitable 'for the more intimate part', saw the mother as the proper source of instruction for girls but pointed out the extent to which mothers felt incompetent to undertake such teaching. If they were not fully aware of

> the right things they should say to their daughters, the idea that they were not the proper persons to teach them should be encouraged ... Therefore she counselled her hearers not to be too busy about educating the child and to give more attention to educating the parent. ... All would be agreed that the teacher was not entitled to approach the children on this question without the permission of the parents.

She emphasised that elementary school teachers might well feel themselves at a loss confronting 'the amazing social problems' of children under their care. 'There were girls exposed to dangers and evils which no girl ought to have to face. In some cases teachers, like mothers, felt themselves not competent or well informed enough about the snares of the world to deal with the matter.' Dr Murrell referred to her lectures. The Authority had wondered if they would find twenty women teachers in London who wanted them, but the number applying had run into

hundreds. There had been accusations that people attended out of 'evil curiosity' which she dismissed as absurd.

Dominating the discussion was a formidable London Headmistress of a girls' elementary department in Hackney, Theodora Bonwick. In the next few years she was to use every possible opportunity to publicise her views and experience. She believed firmly in sex education through class teaching, and described in detail how she had won over all but a tiny minority of parents by a careful combination of letters, meetings, and where necessary, personal interviews. There were a few intransigent parents, almost always the fathers, and their children 'were given some work to do in another room and there was no fuss over the matter at all'. Bonwick was a strong feminist, described by Sylvia Pankhurst as one of the few members of the Women's Social and Political Union willing to give help to the East London Federation of Suffragettes.[30] She was determined to give children clear and detailed information partly to give girls in poor areas 'a method and power of self-protection' and also to forestall wrong impressions.

> She expected that every teacher knew that during lessons such as those of Scripture or Literature, when certain phrases raised enquiry in a child's mind, there passed round the class or a section of it, a cunning grin which meant "Ah, we all know about that, and it is something to be very much ashamed of".

Her experience was that mothers responded gladly and were emphatic in their approval of what had been done. Nothing would be done if public opinion were waited for. Public opinion was won over by successful experiment.

The Conference concluded with a resolution requesting the Minister to receive a deputation asking for an inquiry 'as to the advisability of

30 E. S. Pankhurst, The Suffragette Movement (First published London 1931), 1977 edition, 523. There was a bitter division between these two suffrage organisations.

encouraging the presentation of the idea of racial responsibility to students in training and children in school'. An amendment to exclude elementary schools was defeated.[31]

Several events in the first half of 1914 illustrate the conflicts of opinion over the necessity or practicality of sex education in school. Trouble erupted in Derbyshire at Dronfield school near Sheffield early in the year, where girls as young as eleven at a council school were being taught eugenics by the Headmistress, Miss Outram. Managers, urban district councillors and the local vicar were called in, a searching inquiry being demanded, and calls for Miss Outram to resign. Editorial comment in Education reported the matter but added its appreciation that the Derbyshire Education Committee, while not giving support to the teaching, upheld her position as Head.[32] The Schoolmaster however, voice of the National Union of Teachers and nearer to opinion among rank and file elementary school teachers, took a different view. It gave editorial endorsement to the protests, and reported that many parents were refusing to send their children to school so long as Miss Outram remained there. The 1913 Report of the Ladies' Committee of the NUT was quoted stating that in their opinion it was 'neither practicable nor desirable' to introduce the teaching of sex hygiene into the elementary schools.[33] Giving evidence before a Royal Commission, a Manchester Headmaster referred to the incident speaking of Miss Outram as a fine woman whose mistake had been not to get parents' agreement first.[34] In the event she agreed that she should have done this, stopped the teaching and retained her post.[35]

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31 See reference to this Conference Chapter I I *supra*, 23-24. A full report is given in the Eugenics Review Vol.5, 1913-1914, 1-64. A brief note on the deputation which was received on 2 April 1914 by Mr Trevelyan deputising for the Minister, appeared in the Review Vol.5, 65. His response was sympathetic but non-committal.

32 Education Vol.23, January-June 1914, 'From Week to Week' 13 February 1914, 93.

33 The Schoolmaster 2 January 1914, 310.

34 Royal Commission on Venereal Disease Final Report (1916) Appendix and Minutes of Evidence [Cd.8190]. Evidence of Mr Paton, Headmaster of Manchester Grammar School, 6 July 1914, Q.18, 902.

35 The whole Outram affair is discussed in F. Mort, Dangerous Sexualities (London 1987) 153-163.

In the same winter at an education conference in the north of England the case for sex education was put with a vigour that verged on the hysterical, assembled teachers hearing almost a tirade from the Assistant Medical Officer under the Manchester Education Committee, Dr John Ewart. Urging the need for the eugenic ideal of physical, intellectual and above all moral perfection he continued

> Upon that point I appeal to you as a member of my profession to members of your profession. You ... know perhaps little or nothing at all on this subject. This is no place for me to give you the details but the details are absolutely appalling. I am not talking about the thoughts of young children but about their acts. Some of the acts of young children at an age which you would conceive to be impossible are terribly immoral, and as they grow older the immorality becomes more and more marked ... You know nothing at all about it. You have now had compulsory education for nearly forty years, and each successive year has brought new problems, but no problem that has yet been brought before you requires more of your thought than that of how you are going to deal with this matter of sex in young children. You may reply that this is a matter for parents ... but how many parents do it ? There are many parents who cannot do it and the responsibility is yours.

Norah March, principal speaker at the conference was more restrained, giving a careful address in which she made a rare reference to 'the pleasures of sex'. She could do no more than circle round the subject, dealing in some detail with how it might be approached through nature study. For elementary school children she could only admit to the triple inhibitions of their youth, of parental opposition, and of the general unpreparedness of teachers. Reform would be slow until 'vast bodies of teachers' were equipped with the necessary knowledge and understanding. In discussion one headmaster pointed out the difficulty of instructing mothers, claiming that all books on sex matters, apart from the Bible, were dealt with as obscene literature by the courts.[36]

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36 Education Vol.23, 13 February 1914, 97-99.

Whether the promotion of moral welfare was best served by ignorance or by a limited amount of sex instruction was discussed in a different context in June 1914 at a conference held in London on criminal assaults on children.[37] From the Chair, the Bishop of Ely set the tone for much of the discussion by alluding to child victims of sexual assault, as being, admittedly through no fault of their own, 'moral lepers' who must at all costs be kept from contact with other children. The Rev. Thomas Gree from the Church Penitentiary Association enlarged on this.

> As you, my Lord, said each of these children is really a leper. She is the source of the most awful danger to all the children with whom she is brought in contact. In the homes we have for these cases children have to be watched carefully night and day. It is never safe to leave them together because their minds are so full of evil thoughts that they will talk about these things and spread them.

The Mothers' Union representative challenged the 'moral leper' label with indignation and urged greater education of public opinion. Several speakers insisted that there should always be a suitable woman in court to support girl victims of sexual assaults, a demand frequently raised in the feminist press.[38] Only one speaker raised the need for sex education as a protection for girls, though lamenting the scarcity of adequately trained teachers.

> I should like to press for a few very carefully chosen special teachers who could go round the country and who could give the instruction really in the right way. One single woman has to take the depositions of these offences against children in the county of London. If we had one or two people to go round once a week and teach the children between the ages of twelve and sixteen it would be sufficient.[39]

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37 Report of the Conference on Criminal Assaults on Children London 1914, n.p. I am indebted to Sheila Jeffreys for drawing my attention to this conference report, briefly referred to in Chapter I i *supra.*, n.72. There is no indication of the conference sponsor which may have been the Association of Moral and Social Hygiene or possibly the NSPCC in whose premises it took place.

38 Feminist papers including The Vote, Votes for Women and Common Cause regularly exposed statements in court and judgements biased against girls and women witnesses. The whole issue is discussed in S. Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies (London 1985).

39 Mrs Nott-Bowyer, in Report *ibid.*, 44.

At the same time, May-June 1914, a decision was being taken by the London Education Authority which gave formal expression to the determination of teachers not to be stampeded into experiments urged by those who, with some exceptions, were not in the classroom frontline. After a lengthy investigation based on the evidence of twelve witnesses, the Elementary Education sub-Committee of the Authority produced a report that was accepted by the Education Committee. Its central recommendation was that under no circumstances should sex hygiene be taught in class in the Council's elementary schools. The two main reasons for this ruling were that children's knowledge and experience varied far too widely within a class for such teaching to be possible, and that it would break down children's natural modesty and reserve. Among the teachers and others interviewed in the preparation of the report only one, Theodora Bonwick, dissented and pressed for class teaching. Her views contrasted sharply with those of other witnesses. She put the case for children's self-protection through knowledge as against reliance on protection from outside and claimed that it was possible to gain the whole-hearted support of parents. Indeed their main complaint to her had been that such teaching had been so delayed. In her view class teaching was the way to overcome girls' embarrassment rather than provoke it. The other witnesses while rejecting her views, were impressed with the attention given to the subject in the press and by educationists, and apart from the central veto on class teaching the report strove to be positive. The need and propriety of individual private talks by head teachers to pupils in need of warning and advice was recognised, as well as talks with school leavers individually. The need for more supervision in parks and open spaces in and around London was to be drawn to the attention of the appropriate Council committee and any other relevant authority.[40] Finally a copy of

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40 GLRO EO/PS/2/28 Report of the Education Committee on the teaching of Sex Hygiene together with a precis of evidence on the subject June 1914. The witnesses included four London headmistresses, three London headmasters (one retired), the woman principal of a training college, a woman superintendent of special schools, two members of the Council's medical staff and one lay member of the Council. On the report see also 'Sex Instruction in Schools. An Adverse LCC Report' Education Vol.23, January-July 1914, May 15, 302-304; and Minutes of the LCC Education Committee 13 May 1914.

the report and a precis of the evidence on which it was based, together with two memoranda, one giving information to girl school leavers and the other with further information to parents, teachers and clergy to safeguard girls seeking employment, were to be printed and circulated to all head teachers. Neither of these two memoranda gave sex instruction, but rather information on where to seek help and advice.[41]

The investigation and subsequent report were discussed with the London Education Officer, Sir Robert Blair, during his evidence in 1915 before the Royal Commission on Venereal Disease. It originated, he said, partly from a small number of resolutions sent to the Council from conferences of managers, but more immediately from concern with the attitude of one headmistress at a school. He did not give her name but from a later answer on the same occasion would seem to have been referring to Miss Bonwick.

> One headmistress did attempt to teach sex hygiene in class and I had a few letters - I do not think there were half a dozen - from parents concerned, very strongly objecting to the kind of teaching that was being given. I must say on the other hand that the Headmistress said that she ... had got the consent of the parents, so that probably there were a good many parents who did not object.

He added that the objections were 'of an illiterate kind'.[42]

Such a decision by the country's largest education authority was a blow to the hopes of doctors and eugenists. The Women's Imperial Health Association led by an energetic and eugenist-minded secretary, Dr R. Murray Leslie, publicly expressed the hope that adequate instruction would be provided for teachers in training and that 'the barring clause "that in no circumstances should sex hygiene be introduced into class teaching" be modified by some qualifying clause making it possible to introduce some form of such instruction later should experience prove its

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41 LCC Gazette 15 June 1914.

42 Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases *op.cit.*, Sir Robert Blair's evidence, 8 February 1915. Qs.21,745 and 21,871.

desirability'.[43] This had no more effect on the London Education Committee than did a deputation from managers and parents of Enfield Road Council School Hackney, seeking permission for some sex teaching to be permitted. This was Miss Bonwick's school, and the Council's reply was simply to send them copies of the two memoranda mentioned above.[44]

Material coming from the National Federation of Women Teachers revealed, by contrast, a different state of affairs in Birmingham. An NFWT conference resolution on the need for sex education for all children towards the end of their school life[45] was followed up by a communication from a Birmingham member, Miss A. E. V. Thompson.

> In some Birmingham schools the elder girls (of twelve years and upwards) are getting teaching in sex hygiene. Towards the end of the hygiene course they get two special lessons - one on the physical change from childhood to the beginning of womanhood and the other on fatherhood and motherhood. These are given to the girls of thirteen years and their mothers are invited by letter to be present. There are very few objections. They do not average one per class and the mothers express their gratitude at being invited and their thankfulness for the work being done. "I told mother, miss, all about the lesson. She says she didn't get lessons like that when she was at school and that we are very fortunate".
>
> The girls listen with absorbed interest and there are never any nudgings of neighbours or nasty smiles, although they come from a slum district. Nasty notes are conspicuous by their absence, but this is not surprising when a girl sums up the lesson thus "Isn't it wonderful" ... There is no doubt that the girls are grateful for the lessons and appreciate the difficulty of the teacher's task. Some factory girls were discussing with their teacher the lessons they had received the previous year, and after one girl had suggested that the lecturer might be asked to come again, her friend remarked "She'd got pluck to come and talk to us about that hadn't she?".[46]

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43 The Child Vol.4, No.10, July 1914, 875.

44 The Schoolmistress 'Metropolitan Notes' 10 June 1915, 212.

45 'Report of the Annual Conference of the National Federation of Women Teachers' The Schoolmistress 8 April 1915, 26.

46 The Schoolmistress 5 May 1915, 130.

More information on the Birmingham experience was given in an NFWT pamphlet in the same year. Another teacher, Annie Burns-Smith in an address to fellow teachers after giving much the same information about the course continued

> many of them (the mothers) have remarked that the giving of such lessons gives them "a foundation to work on" so that questions asked by their daughters in the course of home conversations, can be truthfully answered ... I make a point of telling the girls *exactly* what constitutes sexual intercourse and how they came into the world. Written down, this I admit looks startling but is extremely simple in practice. I say unhesitatingly that if this information is not introduced, the lesson is valueless, nay harmful, for the girls will seek the desired information from undesirable sources.

She went on to say that she stressed to the girls that our civilisation required marriage and that no child should be born out of wedlock.[47]

Such glimpses of the relations between adolescent working-class girls and a trusted teacher need to be set against their parallel relations with their mothers. The valuable oral evidence from women in three Lancashire towns in A Woman's Place by Elizabeth Roberts[48] gives some indication of the likelihood of silences and reticence between mothers and daughters over menstruation, sex relations and childbirth in overcrowded homes in which confinements frequently took place and in which the proprieties between the sexes were strictly maintained. The evidence suggests how easily parents may have been alienated by clumsy or insufficient consultation over what a school was proposing to teach - as seems to have been the case with Miss Outram at Dronfield, and which Miss Bonwick and the Birmingham teachers clearly took pains to avoid.

The teacher initiatives in Birmingham referred to above find no direct mention in the Birmingham Education Committee records for that period,

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47 The Teaching of Sex Hygiene in our Elementary Schools (NFWT 1915).

48 E. Roberts, A Woman's Place. An Oral History of Working-class Women 1890-1940 (Oxford 1984) 15-25.

though moral instruction is mentioned as forming 'an important part of every elementary school curriculum', including such topics as 'honesty, truthfulness, industry, temperance, frugality and courtesy'. In this respect it was claimed, 'the curriculum of the schools of the city has for many years been in advance of the Code'. Instruction in infant care had been carried on in schools since 1907, by both permanent and peripatetic staff.[49] There is a brief mention in 1909 of the issue of a pamphlet on Hints on Health for Elder Girls which was to be supplied to schools, but no copy appears to exist in the Birmingham records. Early in 1910, however, a copy was received by the Hygiene Committee of the Bristol Education Committee with the suggestion that Bristol should follow suit.[50] The Hygiene Committee decided to postpone a decision, and indeed the Bristol authority was markedly cautious even on the issue of moral education. In 1911, 1912, 1914 and again in 1916 requests from the Moral Education (formerly Instruction) League for a demonstration lesson to be given by F. J. Gould were refused.[51] In 1918 a request from the Women's Co-operative Guild for a deputation to be received to discuss the advisability of teaching sex hygiene in Bristol elementary schools was likewise turned down.[52] In the same year it was agreed that infant care teaching should be given entirely in nurseries and not in the schools.[53]

The arguments over sex education in schools were sharpened following the Final Report in 1916 of the Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases[54]

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49 Report on Elementary Education in the City from records of the Birmingham Education Committee, 22 February 1907, 108 and 113.

50 Minutes of the Hygiene Committee of the Bristol Education Committee 21 October 1909, item 2481. Again, no copy is extant.

51 Minutes of the Bristol Education Committee 1911-1917. A first hand account of a demonstration lesson by Gould is quoted by P. Gordon and D. Lawton in Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (London 1978) 102-3 and gives some indication of what Bristol lost by this repeated rejection.

52 Minutes of the Bristol Education Committee 22 January 1918, 27.

53 Bristol Education Authority. Volume of special committee reports, 9 May 1918, 219. On this matter see Chapter III ii *supra*.

54 See n.34, *supra*.

which led immediately to the setting up of the National Council for Combatting Venereal Disease[55] and the opening of a considerable campaign to instruct and warn. The Report firmly opposed class teaching on sex in the elementary school but did comment that 'the foundation should be laid in the elementary schools for fuller instruction and more effective help during the critical years of adolescence'. Theodora Bonwick seized on this reference to re-open her case. In letters to The Nation[56], to Education[57] and to the NFWT through the columns of The Schoolmistress she pressed for action in the schools citing her own experience and attacking the view that all teachers were opposed.

> It is certainly regrettable (she wrote to the NFWT) that the Commissioners were evidently unacquainted with what has already been attempted in some of our schools. It is quite a misconception to imagine that "the most experienced teachers are opposed to class teaching on these subjects" as stated. There are large bodies of teachers who are feeling the urgency of something definite being taught ... for they realise that long before a child reaches the age of fourteen much harm has already been done.[58]

Against such a view The Schoolmaster maintained its earlier stand, and went further in opposition, questioning whether the Report's recommendation that confidential advice might be given to school leavers was really within the competence of head teachers, being something 'not lightly to be taken from parents', and continuing 'It is doubtful whether knowledge for the young is not more dangerous than innocence. Innocence means the whiter robe'.[59] A spirited retort from Bonwick merely drew a correspondent's comment that 'the number of women who are able to give this instruction "with tact" is infinitesimal, while the man who can do it has yet to be born'.[60]

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55 Hereafter referred to as the NCCVD. It later became the British Social Hygiene Council.
56 The Nation letter headed 'Education and Sex' 18 March 1916, 879.
57 Education Vol.23, January-June 1916, 151-152.
58 The Schoolmistress 25 May 1916, 124.
59 The Schoolmaster 'News and Comments' 18 March 1916, 359.
60 *Idem.*, 25 March 1916, 408; 8 April 1916.

The LCC Education Committee did not alter its policy on class teaching in response to public agitation, but did give certain facilities to the London and Home Counties branch of the NCCVD in its educational campaign among adults in the Metropolitan area. Subject to prior approval of the lectures and the qualifications of the lecturers it was agreed that LCC school premises might be used for courses organised on a Metropolitan borough basis for 'responsible men and women'. As well as this Dr Mary Scharlieb's pamphlet Venereal Disease in Children and Adolescents based on three lectures given to schoolmistresses at the Royal Society of Medicine in 1916, was to be be distributed with the Council's agreement to head teachers. It was to be left to teachers to warn and to exercise special oversight over older boys and girls just before leaving school.[61]

The NCCVD concentrated its efforts on positive guidance for parents and teachers, particularly the latter. An article in The Shield in 1919 on 'The Educational Work of the NCCVD' spoke of systematic work 'to teach the Guardians and Instructors of the Young' promoting courses of lectures for teachers of both sexes in accessible centres.

> The object of these lectures for teachers is to prepare them for the opportunities of sex education which are coming and in which in some countries have already come. It must be remembered that a large number of teachers are still completely ignorant of sex facts and are hampered by old-fashioned and erroneous traditions. Their training in the colleges fits them excellently for every other kind of instruction, but this department of life has been passed over as if it did not exist. True there are signs that point to a change. In the latest Regulations for the Training of Teachers issued by the Board of Education it is expressly stated that 'instruction in sex hygiene is left to the discretion of each individual college' though the Board suggests that it should be included.[62]

Norah March writing in Education early the previous year referred to the work of the NCCVD and other bodies when she spoke of the sex education

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61 GLRO EO/PS/2/22 'Memorandum' 13 June 1917 and see LCC Gazette 25 June 1917, 316.

62 C. Goslett, 'The Educational Work of the NCCVD' The Shield. A Review of Moral and Social Hygiene August-September 1919, 169-170.

movement as making 'rapid strides beyond all expectation' with the most obvious sign being the improved and extended education of teachers. Courses of lectures dealt with

> the place and power of sex in nature, the growth of the child as influenced by sex, instruction in the facts of sex, ethical training, eugenic education for parenthood, special problems which teachers have to face and so on. In the provinces particularly a widespread educational movement among teachers has thus been initiated - in many cases the Public Health Authority and the Education Authority have been the promoters of the work - and should feel amply repaid for their venture by the enthusiasm with which the teachers, both men and women, have attended the lectures arranged.[63]

Giving evidence, later in 1918, before the second session of the National Birth-rate Commission, she re-emphasised the responsibility of teachers and of mothers.

> If parents are anxious that their children should have this instruction, and are not able to give it themselves, I am one of those who suggest that teachers could act *in loco parentis*. All over the country this is being considered and at present I am giving a course of lectures to a mixed group of parents and teachers at Finchley. There are about two hundred or three hundred of these women teachers and mothers together at these lectures. That is just an indication of what is going on all over the country. Often in the last year I have lectured to over a thousand people a week.[64]

Further evidence of the state of the sex education movement shortly after the war comes from the fourth Report of the National Birth-rate Commission published in 1923 under the title Youth and the Race. A witness from Leicester described the voluntary instruction available, with parental consent, to all scholars attending continuation schools, 'a good many thousands of boys and girls under and over fifteen' having received this teaching. The woman doctor describing this work wished it could be extended to much younger children, with the whole sex act described to

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63 N. March, 'The Sex Education Movement Today' Education Vol.31, January-June 1918, 2-3.

64 Problems of Population and Parenthood being the Second Report of and Chief Evidence taken by the National Birth-rate Commission 1918-1920 (London 1920). Evidence of Miss Norah March, 355-356.

ten-to-eleven year olds.[65] Miss Selena Dix, representing the National Union of Teachers, gave details of the work in Coventry. Unlike neighbouring Birmingham the local education authority was unsympathetic, but in the previous year (1920)

> the teachers obtained permission to use school halls for an experiment at their own expense. Mothers of girls were invited to an evening lecture given by a well-known 'settlement' worker who is also a nurse and a midwife. The mothers responded and listened with rapt attention, asked many intelligent questions and the results were excellent. This experiment was successfully repeated, and lectures to fathers and mothers are now part of the programme of the Coventry NCCVD ... Among the school gatherings of parents and teachers not one voice has condemned what must be regarded by the parents as a somewhat surprising departure from the old ways. Mothers freely ask for the place and date of the next lecture that they may send other mothers to learn. We regard this as a great advance on the pre-war parental attitude.[66]

How far the enthusiasm reflected in these comments had spread within the teacher training colleges was indicated in the evidence of Miss Edith Cooper from Birmingham. Replying to a question from Dr Kimmins on whether prejudice there was breaking down she said

> Yes. A few years ago I think you remember that this subject was not even touched upon and there was not even a single lecture given. I was a member of a deputation to the Board of Education two years ago on the subject ... and we were distinctly told that some of the older heads of the training colleges were very much averse to the subject being taken, but we now find that gradually the prejudice is breaking down. The difficulty was first the prejudice with the older principals and secondly the want of teachers who could really tackle it satisfactorily from the child's point of view.

In answer to another question she mentioned a particular problem

> I might say that they are giving a few lectures to the students which they think will be sufficient but in some colleges the girls are too frightened to go to the lectures. I have a case of a young student

65 Youth and the Race *op.cit.*, n.27, Evidence of Dr Bond, 114-118.

66 Youth and the Race *ibid.*, n.27, Evidence of Miss Selena Dix, 123-125.

who a short time ago informed me that she had been invited to one or two lectures in the training college but had been afraid to go. Last year I had another girl from a totally different training college and I said "Do you have any special lectures?" and she replied that she had had two or three. I then asked her what she thought of them and she said : "The first lesson terrified me so that I scarcely dared listen to the second and third. I thought it was horrible."[67]

The Commission Report commented with a guarded pessismism on the competence and willingness of teachers to embark on sex education, and the key passage was quoted by the Education Officer of the LCC, and used as evidence against any alteration in the Council's ban on class teaching. While it was admitted that a growing number of teachers were prepared to give such instruction

> it would seem that in the elementary schools at least the obligation is not universally recognised and that men teachers are more opposed to this teaching than the women. The majority of teachers are not yet competent to give instruction as they have not themselves been taught in the training colleges. The Board of Education syllabus on Hygiene does not contain this subject. The Commission in view of the necessity of competent instruction in the schools of the country, urges that teachers should be adequately trained to impart it and that the matter should receive the serious consideration of the Board of Education.[68]

In the same year sex instruction was among topics discussed in a symposium edited by Sir James Marchant.[69] A yardstick for school instruction was given in terms both nervous and negative

> Care must be taken not to anticipate interest; not to excite; not to say what will have to be unlearnt afterwards; not to make false mysteries ... not to deal with the pathological; not to frighten; not to pretend that grown-ups are angels; and above all not to say too much.[70]

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67 Youth and the Race *op.cit.*, Evidence of Miss Edith Cooper, 156.

68 GLRO EO/PS/2/28 Report by the Education Officer to the Education (General Purposes sub-) Committee 1923, quoting from Youth and the Race *ibid.*

69 J. Marchant (ed.), The Claims of the Coming Generation (London 1923).

70 Geddes and Thomson, Sex (London 1914) 97, quoted by J. A. Thomson (Regius Professor of Natural History University of Aberdeen) in 'Sex Instruction of the Young' Marchant *ibid.*, VI, 112.

The veteran Dr Mary Scharlieb contributed a chapter on the moral training of girls. As early as 1914 a book by her on young people and marriage had been attacked in National Health as prudish and Victorian,[71] and by 1923 she expressed an honest bewilderment with the post-war generation

> Up until recently parents, guardians and teachers held that ignorance was the same thing as innocence; they thought that they could hide the facts of life from the eyes of the young ... and that well-brought-up young girls were absolutely without sex knowledge and sex feeling. There is little doubt that young people have always felt about these matters quite differently from what we thought they did.[72]

ii Effects of the early cinema on the moral training of children

The litany of moral evils before and during the war held responsible for changed and loosened standards of conduct particularly among young people, included the new element of the cinema. Serious concern at its effects on working-class children was emerging from about 1912-1913. A major investigation under the auspices of the National Council of Public Morals reported in 1917 and the evidence presented to it provides material relevant to any survey of moral attitudes, and of anxieties over moral guidance.[73]

Given the extent in the early twentieth century of moralising attention and of censorship, threatened or imposed, directed at theatres, music halls, bookstalls and even picture postcards, the cinema industry dating roughly from the mid 1890s came under early scrutiny.[74] A recent history of the

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71 Unsigned review in 'The Health Worker's Library' National Health June 1914, 382.

72 M. Scharlieb, 'The Moral Training of Modern Girls' in Marchant, *op.cit.*, VI, 112.

73 The Cinema, its present position and future possibilities being the Report of and Chief Evidence taken by the Cinema Commission of Inquiry instituted by the National Council of Public Morals (London 1917) (Hereafter Cinema Commission of Inquiry)

74 E. J. Bristow, Vice and Vigilance. Purity Movements in Britain since 1700 (Dublin 1977) 215-222.

British film industry describes as 'hole and corner' the fashion in which the cinema grew. The early sleazy picture houses (the so-called 'penny-gaffs'), though being replaced by about 1908-1910 with smarter picture palaces, saddled the trade with a bad reputation aggravated by poor technical quality both of film and of projection in the cheaper cinemas.[75] A form of entertainment so accessible to young working-class girls and boys was particularly likely to attract attention from both self-appointed and official guardians of health and morals. Thus the Cinematograph Act of 1910, concerned primarily with physical safety especially fire risks, was extended by theLondon County Council to include moral responsibility for the well-being of the audience and hence powers of censorship - an interpretation upheld in the courts - with licensing of picture houses as an enforcing sanction. The film industry, in its own defence, organised with the Home Office a system of prior censorship. Details of the negotiations lie outside the scope of this study, but by 1913 an early Board of Film Censors was in being under the exacting presidency of G. A. Redford, a former censor of plays in the Lord Chamberlain's office.[76]

This restrictive process ran parallel with a good deal of enthusiasm for the use of films in school. By March 1912 a regular column in Education gave updated information on the rapidly growing number of educational films and answered or anticipated teachers' queries on cost, availability and similar matters.[77] Early in 1913 an international conference on The Cinema as an Educational Medium was held in London and there were hopes expressed, though these did not materialise, that the London Education Authority would officially back the use of films in schools.[78]

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75 G. Perry, The Great British Picture Show (London 1985) 10.

76 *Ibid.*, 30-31, 38.

77 Education Vol.19, January-June 1912, 176,208, 268,399; Vol.20, July-December 1912, nine further entries.

78 Education *Idem.*, Vol.21, January-June 1913, 209-211.

Promotion of the film as a teaching aid sprang partly from a genuine belief that it could help the learning process,[79] but also reflected alarm at the increasing grip on children of the cinema as entertainment and the hope that decent, informative educational films might have a salutary moral influence. A warning note at the 1913 international conference referred to 'a large juvenile audience' being attracted by 'sensational and criminal pieces', and this was followed up in August 1913 by a more full-blooded attack. An unofficial but weighty committee circularised all local education authorities with a document urging them to harness the cinema to education, it being too popular a medium to suppress. Commercial films were arraigned as responsible for 'incitements to dissipation, coarseness, illicit passion, theft, robbery, arson and homicide by the representation of moving pictures dealing with sensational, indecent, erotic and criminal incidents'. Sir Alfred Rollit, lawyer, magistrate and business magnate, chaired the committee which included the Bishop of Birmingham Chairman of the National Council of Public Morals, the Headmasters of Eton, Rugby and Winchester, Lord Meath, founder of Empire Day and of the Duty and Discipline Movement, the Archbishop of Westminster and Sir James Yoxall, Secretary of the National Union of Teachers. Condemnation of the moral and social effects of the cinema from the USA and several European countries was quoted, and action taken to introduce censorship was noted with approval.[80]

Early in 1914 Canon Rawnsley,[81] while accepting that cinema-going did keep some adults out of public houses and some children off the streets, moved a resolution in the Lower House of Convocation approving action taken by the education authorities of some northern and Midland towns and counties[82] in co-operation with the justices to regulate the attendance

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79 'The Glasgow Cinematograph Exhibition' Education Vol.23, January-June 1914, 151; and see also Journal of Education November 1915, 658.

80 Education Vol.22, July-December 1913, 115-117.

81 Hardwicke Rawnsley, Canon of Carlisle, 1851-1920. A frequent contributor to the educational press and probably best known as a co-founder of the National Trust.

82 Liverpool, Birmingham, Blackburn and other unspecified towns, together with the counties of Lancashire and Cumberland.

of elementary school children at the cinema 'in the best interests of education, character and health'. Action taken included restriction on evening entry for unaccompanied children of school age, strict control of any films allowed at cheap afternoon showings, and closure by the justices of any cinema near to an elementary school shut because of infectious illness. Rawnsley castigated the device of playbills advertising lurid titles of adult films as 'not for children under fourteen', thus ensuring 'that every child over fourteen will consider itself an adult and will crowd in to see'. He concluded with a plea that the schools should take the matter in hand. 'Why should not the schools have their own films for exhibition to children, and why should not children be admitted to see these films after school on a distinct promise that the children who are privileged to attend these shall not attend the ordinary cinematograph hall?'[83]

Despite appeals of this kind the London County Council turned down on grounds of cost proposals to use the school organisation for the showing of educational films.[84] It may also have been influenced by the report to the Elementary Education sub-Committee of the Council's Educational Adviser, Dr William Garnett. In a critical appraisal of the cinema in education he touched on the moral and delinquency issues though avoiding the hysterical tone of some commentators. He summed up the main injurious effects as temptation for children to steal money for admission, injury to health and school work by late-night attendance, eye damage from old and jerky films, imitation of crime sequences, and - a point not made elsewhere - the stirring-up of children's emotions by, for example, shipwreck scenes where there could be no resolution through action of the strong feelings aroused. His conclusion was unequivocal

> I do suggest that its (the cinematograph's) value is very much overestimated by many of its friends, and I suggest much more strongly that the mischief which the cinema is doing outside the schools is so very much greater than any good which it can possibly

83 'The Cinematograph and the Schools : Canon Rawnsley's Indictment', Education, Vol.23, January-June 1914, 150-151.

84 *Ibid.*, 'Metropolitan Notes', 88.

serve within the schools that, for the present, local education authorities should rather turn their attention towards curing the evil than towards encouraging the further development of cinema enterprise by introducing the instrument on a large scale into school work.[85]

A report from the Board of Film Censors issued in 1914 relating to over seven thousand 'subjects' examined listed among scenes objected to - gruesome murders or details of crime and war, scenes inciting to crime, morbid death scenes, scenes tending to disparage public characters and institutions, some depictions of drunkenness and insanity, medical operations, cruelty to women, scenes suggestive of immorality and irreverent treatment of sacred or solemn subjects.[86]

The effects on children, whether alleged or substantiated, were seldom differentiated by commentators as between girls and boys, though specific delinquency, such as stealing for admission money or imitating crime, tended to be spoken of in terms of boys. The 1917 Cinema Commission report refers to 'about ninety per cent of the elementary school population from eight to fourteen years' frequenting cinemas in thickly populated areas,[87] though it is reasonable to assume that girls had less spare time than boys. Dr Kimmins's survey of cinema-going and taste in films among elementary school children confirmed that more girls than boys came into the small category of those who had never been to a cinema.[88]
Occasionally specific reference was made to the effects on girls. Under the heading 'Sexual Influences' Professor H. MacNaughton-Jones wrote in 1914

> There are those, especially young girls approaching and at the period of puberty, who are of the nervous and neurotic type, and for whom some exhibitions in which sensual cravings and yieldings are the

85 GLRO EO/GEN/6/79 'The Cinematograph' Report from the Educational Adviser to the Elementary Education sub-Committee of the London County Council 4 November 1913.

86 Report of the British Board of Film Censors quoted in article on 'The Dangers of the Cinema' The Child Vol.4, No.6, March 1914, 485-486.

87 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Report and Evidence 1917, I i.

88 *Ibid.*, Evidence of Dr C. W. Kimmins, Chief Inspector of the Education Department of the London County Council.

> main feature of the display, are disastrous. The suggestions which just fringe the margins of decency originate thoughts and desires which become obsessions, that render their victims an easy prey to those temptations ... certain to beset them when they come out into the world and society.[89]

The same writer returned to the theme two years later, commenting 'It is absolutely revolting to see a youthful audience of various ages viewing the social and domestic dilemmas, the consequences of secret or illegitimate passion on which a whole drama or comedy depends'.[90] Domestic and love stories were the girls' favourites in the cinema, as the Kimmins survey predictably confirmed, as compared with boys' tastes that ran to 'crook', adventure and war films.[91]

This debate carried on mainly in the educational and child-orientated press and other publications, virtually never raised serious criticism of the aesthetically impoverished diet offered to young cinema-goers, but concentrated on the fear of physical and moral ill effects.[92] Some of the fears were rational enough such as eyestrain, fatigue and the molesting of children in darkened cinemas. The latter was a reason for doubts about regulations to exclude unaccompanied children who, it was feared, might find some unknown adult outside to take them in. Other alarms rested more on assumptions quite often challenged as unproven or exaggerated such as the direct link between film examples and petty crime.[93] After August 1914 these assumptions joined the arsenal of wartime accusations over the decay of working-class domestic conduct - drunkenness among women, reckless expenditure of higher earnings, unbridled public behaviour of girls and the like.[94] The counter-attack such as it was, tried

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89 H. MacNaughton-Jones, ex-Professor of Obstetrics at the Queen's University, 'Child Welfare and the Psychology of the Cinema' The Child, Vol.4, No.6, March 1914, 414.

90 *Idem.*, 'The Cinema and Child Welfare' Vol.6, No.7, April 1916, 349.

91 Kimmins, *op.cit.*, but compare schoolgirls' answers to Dr Marie Stopes *infra*, 174.

92 An exception is G. Bernard Shaw's article 'The Cinema as a Moral Leveller' New Statesman Vol.3, No.64, 27 June 1914; and see n.113, *infra*.

93 Youth and the Race *op.cit.*, n.27, Evidence of Cecil Leeson, Secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform, contesting the view that the cinema caused crime. 16 June 1922, 316.

94 E. Sellers, 'Wilful Waste and Woeful Want' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.79, 670-685; and *idem.*, 'Boy and Girl War Products' Vol.84, 702-716, (see *supra* page 26, n.76).

to meet objections on pragmatic and social grounds and brought no new concepts to the debate. Thus an unsigned contribution to The Child commenting on the restrictive measures described by Rawnsley, asked what children excluded from the cinema would do instead.

> Are their homes better ventilated than the 'palaces', or the street corners less draughty? Are the stories they are likely to be reading more conducive to knowledge and virtue than the pictures they are not allowed to enjoy? Is the print of such stories read in such light as their homes are likely to possess any better for their eyesight than are the films? Will they go to bed any earlier or sleep any sounder for being left at home?[95]

Some witnesses appearing before the Cinema Commission of 1917 were to take up points of this kind even more strongly, and to challenge as smug and uninformed those seeking to deprive children and adults from wretched homes and poor districts of the warmth, comfort and jollity of the picture houses.

Efforts to check and control children's cinema attendances nevertheless continued. In 1916 action was taken through the Education and the Theatres and Music Halls committees of the London County Council. Licensed picture houses were to appoint special children's attendants with a distinguishing badge, and unaccompanied children were as far as possible to be seated together. No film 'likely to be subversive of public morality' was to be shown and cinemas were informed of the precise type of scene that could lead to a licence being refused.[96] In spite of wartime shortages of suitable attendants, one witness in 1917 testified to their effect commenting that 'restrictions on the children have been if anything too strict. In their desire to secure orderly audiences sometimes, I think, the attendants erred on the side of repression.'[97]

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95 'The Kinematograph and the Child' unsigned comment The Child Vol.4, No.6, March 1914, 471.

96 GLRO EO/GEN/6/18 Report of Theatres and Music Halls Committee, 4 April 1916.

97 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of F. W. Barnett, 203-209.

The Cinema Commission of Inquiry set up by the National Council of Public Morals was welcomed by the cinema trade associations, alarmed at rumours of drastic Home Office censorship proposals. W. Garazzi King, Secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association claimed, in his evidence before the Commission, that the Home Office had suggested to various local authorities a total ban on entry for children under fourteen. He even quoted an unnamed official as saying that the cinema should be 'stamped out'. The appointment of the Commission had, he said, relieved the tension.[98] As well as from the trade, which had three representatives on the Commission, evidence was taken from teachers, from two sets of London school-children, from inspectors, school managers, care committee workers, chief constables, magistrates and probation officers.

Given the attitudes of some moralists both clerical and lay, quoted above, the opening statement by the National Council in its Cinema Report reveals an interesting shift in approach. Under the heading 'Principles on which the Council conducts its operations' it claimed to have

> expressly set out to win the sympathy of the men and women who are writing our books, are catering for public amusement, edit or own our newspapers, and have under their control the vast machinery for instantly and effectively reaching millions of people. We have seen the folly of making enemies of those great and potent agencies by indiscriminate denunciation, by standing upon a lofty pedestal and playing the superior part, censoring, denouncing, imprisoning ... Our record, especially our Commission on the Birth-rate, and our principles brought the leaders of the cinematograph trade to seek our help.[99]

The Report in effect represented an important stage in the process by which moralists and educationists were coming to terms with the cinema industry. Witnesses still revealed contradictory attitudes ranging from bitter disapproval to wholehearted appreciation of the cinema's social value in poor urban areas, but their evidence also revealed it as an

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98 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of W. Garazzi King, 299-302.
99 *Ibid.*, Introduction, vi.

unstoppable phenomenon.[100] It was clear that in practical terms no force existed in the country capable of keeping working-class children out of the picture houses. Witnesses describing surveys undertaken in the provinces spoke in terms of thousands. In Liverpool 30,000 children (16,000 boys and 14,000 girls) had been included in a survey of cinema-going habits.[101] In Worcester 1843 boys and 1868 girls had been questioned, revealing a percentage of regular attenders of 39 and 25 respectively.[102] In numbers and in power of attraction the cinema reduced to pitiable proportions the efforts of churches, clubs, and youth organisations to draw in children and young people. The two probation officers who gave evidence were in no doubt of this. F. W. Barnett, whose area included Westminster, Chelsea, part of Lambeth and all 'under sixteen' cases from the West London Magistrates' Court, having predicted that if the cinemas were closed 'there would be an immediate increase in hooliganism, shoplifting and similar street misdemeanours' added

> So far as the official opposition of churches is concerned I should say that ... there is an entire lack of understanding as to the practical conditions in which the poor live. Owing to this there has been a relative failure on the part of the churches to attract the poorer classes and as a result the churches tend to quarrel with any well-ordered recreation that *does* attract the poor.[103]

John Massey, Court Missionary and Probation Officer of Old Street Police Court, whose areas covered some of the poorest parts of London, developed this argument. After pointing out that cinemas offered children from wretched homes warmth, music, and 'a real laugh' he continued

> What is to hinder the cinema from becoming the best night school or social club? ... Why should the parson and the district visitor hold aloof? Those who have the least knowledge of the habits, the

100 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Part I, xxi. Figures given by the trade included an estimated 1,075,875,000 attendances per annum; about 70 million feet of film running through projectors per week; 80-100,000 people directly engaged in the trade.

101 *Ibid.*, Evidence of Liverpool headmaster John Kay, 118.

102 *Ibid.*, Evidence of the Dean of Worcester, 146.

103 *Ibid.*, Evidence of F. W. Barnett, 208.

difficulties and the squalid lives of these one and two-roomed tenants talk the most foolish things against the cinema ... Why should not the parson meet the street crowds in his district (those who never darken the doors of his church or chapel) at the pictures one night a week and say a word on the subject of the films - preferably on a Sunday night? What is needed today is real first-hand knowledge of the conditions in which the poor live. Lack of this is the explanation of so much silly talk about pictures being harmful.[104]

Over the cinema and crime the Report drew a much needed distinction between 'moral evils' incidental to the picture house, referring to such matters as fear of molestation, and those 'consequential on the kind of film shown'. As previously mentioned, anxiety over girls was largely concerned with the fear of sexual stimulation. A statement from one of the examiners for the British Board of Film Censors explained, for example, their criteria over sex. 'First night' subjects in films, once 'fairly numerous' had been completely banned, as had the portrayal of abnormal sex relations, for example between father and unknown daughter, or brother and unknown sister. On seduction the Censor objected to any treatment of the subject that suggested 'that a poor girl was morally justified in succumbing to temptation to escape from sordid surroundings and uncongenial work'. Lastly in more general terms 'while it is impossible to exact that poetic justice should always overtake the evil doer, it is at least essential that no halo be placed round the head of the delinquent'.[105] T. P. O'Connor MP, President of the Board of Film Censors, in evidence gave the forty-three guidelines laid down for the Censors. No fewer than twenty of these were directly or indirectly connected with the treatment of sex, other categories relating to politics and war, crime and punishment, cruelty and the treatment of religious subjects.[106]

One interesting direct conflict of opinion between witnesses concerned the degree of realism in films in relation to children. Miss Vickers from the Holborn Local Association of Child Care Committees, who was in close touch

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104 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of John Massey, 217-219.
105 *Ibid.*, Statement from the British Board of Film Censors, 105.
106 *Ibid.*, Evidence of T. P. O'Connor MP, 244-259

with elementary schools in Holborn and St. Pancras, complained

> At present the cinema is too exciting. It should be more normal and not so exaggerated and should deal with the beautiful things in life rather than the sordid aspect of human nature. The children often live among such sordid surroundings that it is surely a mistake to accentuate them.[107]

F. W. Barnett, the probation officer previously quoted, took a different view

> the general phases of life there shown are in the main what I should wish them to be for such a purpose - that is to say, they give a faithful representation of city life in which both the failings and virtues of humanity are thrown up in bold relief. From my point of view I should not wish to give my probationers a view of life which was too widely different from the actual conditions they would themselves later have to encounter.[108]

Dr Kimmins, Chief Inspector to the London Education Authority, may have been responsible for the presence of some elementary schoolboys and girls among the witnesses. Since 1915 his group of studies had provided unique direct comment from London schoolchildren on the war, on reaction to air raids and most recently on their favourite films.[109] To give evidence before the Commission may have been a daunting experience for eleven to thirteen year-olds, but their answers, though laconic, had a certain realistic insoucience. Two South London schoolgirls, frequent cinema goers in the Oval-Brixton-Newington Butts area were questioned on behaviour and on film content.

> Q.47. Do the girls sit among the boys? - Yes, all mixed up, and the attendant comes round, and if the boys start whistling about and do that again, he turns them out.
>
> Q.48. I suppose the girls never do that kind of thing? - That all depends.

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107 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of Miss Vickers, 259-262.
108 *Ibid.*, Evidence of F. W. Barnett, given earlier.
109 For the Kimmins reports see Chapters II iii *supra* and V ii *infra*.

Q.53. What would happen if the boys started fighting? - They would not start fighting, because they are always too anxious to see the pictures.

Q.57. At the picture palace do you take any steps to find out what is going on? - No, we take our chance.

Further questions revealed circus and drama as favourite topics but not love dramas.

Q.74. (Dr Marie Stopes) Why don't you like love dramas? - There is too much fooling about in them, and there is always a hatred between the two men and the two women.

Q.75. You don't like to see two men hating each other? - Well it's a lot of silliness. I do not think it would happen in real life.

Q.93. Have the boys ever been rude to you in the cinema? - No, but they have pulled our hair and taken our hats off.

Q.94. Do they only do that in the cinema? - No, and if the attendant is about he puts them outside.[110]

As F. W. Barnett had noted, some London cinema attendants were strict. One conclusion of the Commission was that the London system should be more widely adopted.

On matters of behaviour the findings of the Commission gave some reassurance to the cinema industry. Any talk of abolition or suppression was dismissed as impossible and not even desirable, and the benefit of keeping children off the streets was recognised. Film content was another matter. Stricter censorship was called for and the need stressed for vigilant co-operation between welfare and youth organisations and education authorities.[111] Treatment of sex, in spite of guidelines, was criticised. 'Even when indecency or obscenity as the law may define it may be avoided, there is often a suggestiveness when dealing with "sex"

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110 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of London schoolgirls (unnamed) 198-201.
111 *Ibid.*, Findings : xlvi-xlvii.

relations which for a large number of youthful spectators must be regarded as objectionable.'[112]

Under the title 'TheInfant Phenomenon' The New Statesman reviewed the Commission report in January 1918 in terms at once penetrating and patronising.

> It may be said at once that although the cinema can scarcely claim to have left the court without a stain on its character, the Commissioners by no means endorse the opinion that it is nothing more or less than a "rogue and vagabond" luring youth to its destruction, or indeed, that the connection between the cinema and crime is anything but casual and accidental.

The main thrust of the review was against low levels of taste and the absence of aesthetic value. In effect the cinema was providing 'thrilling little tarradiddles for the young, the poor and the feeble-minded in order that they may be prevented from looking at or listening to worse things somewhere else'.[113]

The contradictory attitudes displayed by witnesses towards the moral influence of the cinema reflected the arguments considered above over the maintenance of moral standards and the pros and cons of sex education for young girls. Although Theodora Bonwick's appeals for such education had isolated her in 1914, by the end of the war the work of the NCCVD had shown some advance at least in the instruction of teachers and of parents. The determination of the LCC Education Authority however, to maintain its stance against class teaching[114] received some extra support from women teachers in 1924. The Central Consultative Committee of Headmistresses of Girls Schools in London invited all their borough committees to reconsider the question of this teaching in elementary schools. Out of twenty-seven replies, twenty-one were opposed, five considered that it should be left to

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112 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Section I, xxix.

113 'The Infant Phenomenon. Report of the Cinema Commission of Inquiry' New Statesman 5 January 1918, 329-331.

114 See n.68 *supra*.

the head teacher and one advocated teaching by a lady doctor. Bonwick, who chaired the Consultative Committee, put a resolution that courses in sex hygiene should not be discouraged and should be given at the head teacher's discretion. Her motion was heavily defeated by seventy votes to five and no further action was taken.[115] The LCC could therefore claim to be reflecting the opinion of many women teachers. Moreover by 1924 the compulsory Day Continuation experiment of 1921-1922 was a matter of history, closing yet another possible avenue for such work.[116]

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115 GLRO EO/PS/2/28 Reference paper from the Education Officer's Department on Sex Hygiene, 17 July 1924.

116 See Chapter VI *infra*, 245-246 for the failure of the experiment.

V Patriotism in School

i Council policy before and during the War

Patriotic and imperial propaganda in the years following the South African War was much concerned to exalt the moral concepts of duty, self-sacrifice and public service. Bombastic jingoism was out of fashion in the face of widespread concern at the effects of poverty, especially urban poverty, on national health and physique and the relation of this concern to the well-being of country and empire.[1] The reforming emphasis of some imperialists, took the form of an authoritarian paternalism, as exemplified by the Duty and Discipline movement founded by the Earl of Meath in 1908.[2] Others, of whom Lord Milner was a notable example, were shrewdly aware that patriotism and pride in empire needed to be linked to serious policies for domestic social reform, if necessary in co-operation with sections of the Labour movement.[3] Such policies could be linked to current concern over national efficiency and the improvement of 'racial' stock. Speaking in 1906, Milner dismissed any antagonism between social reform and imperialism. 'To my mind they are inseparable ideals absolutely interdependent and complementary to one another ... You must have a soundness at the core - health, intelligence, industry; and these cannot be gained without a fair average standard of well-being'.[4] A few years later he was to speak of patriotism as being 'choked in the squalor and degradation of the slums of our great cities'[5] while Lord Roberts remarked in the same year that 'the conditions amid which millions of our

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1 A. M. McBriar, Fabian Socialism and English Politics 1882-1918 (Cambridge 1962) 11-13, has a useful discussion on the terms 'imperialist' and 'jingoist' in this period.

2 Earl of Meath 1841-1929. On the Duty and Discipline movement see Chapter 11 n.65.

3 J. O. Stubbs, 'Lord Milner and Patriotic Labour' English Historical Review No.345, October 1972, 717-728.

4 From a speech by Milner to the Manchester Conservative Club, 14 December 1906. Quoted in Stubbs, *ibid.*, 717.

5 Milner, The Nation and Empire (London 1912) 496. Quoted in B. Semmel, Imperialism and Social Reform 1895-1914 (London 1960) 184.

people are living appear to me to make it natural that they should not care a straw under what rule they may be called to dwell, and I can well understand their lack of patriotic feeling'.[6]

The strong interest in these years in the control and direction of adolescent boys and girls made them an obvious target for patriotic propaganda and inculcation of pride in the empire. Boys in particular received this unofficially through books and magazines well before 1900, but the new emphasis referred to above, stressing dedication to duty and unboastful pride in Britain's imperial achievements, could, without difficulty, find a place in the framework of moral instruction for both sexes being urged on schools and on youth organisations both religious and secular.[7] The institution of Empire Day to be celebrated on May 24, birthday of Queen Victoria, provided a useful focal point within both, gaining some acceptance by local education authorities before the First World War, though it was not until 1916 that the Government recommended its official acceptance to the King.[8]

The celebration had its origin in Canada in the 1890s and was inaugurated in England in 1904 with influential, though not as yet official, backing. Lord Meath, moving spirit in the matter, in his speech to the initial public meeting stressed that there should be no connection with jingoism nor with desire for military glory. The emphasis was to be on the duties and responsibilities of empire, and on the combatting of internal decay brought about in his view by moral and spiritual apathy, by the growth of enervating luxury and by lack of interest in or knowledge of the Empire. In 1906 an Empire Day Catechism was published giving facts and figures that all British subjects should know; Kipling's 'Land of Our Birth' was adopted as the Empire Day song, and a proposal made that every

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6 Earl Roberts, Letter to The Times 9 October 1911. Quoted in Semmel *op.cit.*, 221.

7 See Chapter IV i *supra*.

8 H. E. Cooper, British Education Public and Private and the Empire 1880-1930 Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Edinburgh 1979 has useful material in Chapters III and IV on Empire Day and related issues.

elementary school should fly the Union Jack in school hours.[9]

After initial hesitation in 1906, the London Education Authority agreed in the following year that Empire Day should be celebrated in its schools, but kept Meath's enthusiasms at arm's length. Thus his proposal that a large card with his message to boys and girls should be displayed in all school departments was turned down as was a later proposal in 1908 that he should visit head teachers to urge the learning by heart of the Catechism. The Education Committee agreed that all newly built schools should have flagstaffs, but provision in existing ones was left to voluntary offers of staffs and flags, provided that the Council incurred no expense.[10] The cautious approach may partly have resulted from a wish for a fairly low-key attitude 'avoiding a mere spectacular display accompanied by artificial sentiment or extravagance of pride of possession' and may also reflect concern at the opposition to such celebrations in school from some parents. The Education Committee Minutes recorded a number of protests, some against Empire Day itself and others at children losing their attendance mark if parents wished to withdraw them, thus in effect making the occasion compulsory. An entry of 3 July 1907 ran 'We are informed that on the grounds of conscientious objection many parents did not permit their chidren to attend school on the morning of the 24th, i.e. when the school celebration took place'.[11] Protests were recorded in 1907 from the Battersea branch of the Operative Bricklayers' Society demanding the right to withdraw children without loss of their mark, and an appeal against mark loss was received from the Managers of a Woolwich group of schools. The Battersea branch of the Social Democratic Federation protested in 1908 and the Islington branch of the Independent Labour Party in 1909.[12] In 1913 the Education Committee noted

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9 Earl of Meath, Memories of the Twentieth Century (London 1924). The proposal that the flag should be flown was made by Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.

10 Minutes of the London County Council Education Committee. The matters of the card, the Catechism and the flags are dealt with respectively in Vol.II, 1907, 2116; Vol.I, 1908, 1636; Vol.I, 1907, 1475.

11 *Ibid.*, Vol.II, 1907, 2116.

12 *Ibid.*, These objections are noted respectively in Vol.I, 1907, 1988; Vol.II, 1907, 2117; Vol.I, 1908, 1734; Vol.I, 1909, 1050.

the receipt of communications in regard to the celebration of Empire Day and the suggested substitution in some instances, of Peace Day, in London schools, from the undermentioned societies (1) London Society of Compositors, (2) National Society of Operative Printers' Assistants (London Branch), (3) Electrical Winders' Society of Great Britain, (4) London and Provincial Union of licensed Vehicle Workers, (5) National Union of Clerks and the Paddington and Kensington Labour Council and (6) the Poplar Labour League.

It was noted that several of these protests referred to the Council's refusal to allow children leave of absence to attend Labour Day celebrations on the first of May.[13]

The circular of 1907 to teachers from the Chief Education Officer on the function and tone of Empire Day was re-written in 1911. The same note of high seriousness as had marked the earlier statement was maintained. Partnership in Empire and not possession was to be the keynote. In lessons related to imperial matters in the week before the celebration, the loss of the American colonies should be included because 'it is not inappropriate to remind ourselves of our great colonial failure as well as of our triumphs'. An interesting paragraph concerned the relations between Britain, India and the Crown colonies which were 'somewhat difficult to explain in a proper light'. Merely British prejudice must be abandoned.

> Children are only too ready to conceive of our connection with Hindoo (sic) and negro as a relation of proprietorship somewhat after the model of Crusoe and Friday. They should understand that Great Britain rules in such states not as master over servants but as a friend and experienced adviser.

In all it should be 'a joyous and decorative occasion with no arrogant sense of material superiority'.[14] May 24 was given a place in the Handbook to the School Calendar published in 1910 for the use of LCC teachers and containing ninety short historical pieces on topics suitable for anniversary celebrations in school. Heroes of Empire from Drake to Kitchener held a

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13 Minutes, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, 1913, 1050.

14 *Ibid.*, Vol.1, 1911, 979-980.

substantial place, flanked by a medley of events from the building of St Paul's and the opening of Guy's Hospital to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots.[15]

The tone of sober patriotism enjoined in the 1911 circular seems to have been well in line with opinion in some teacher circles, judging from an editorial in The London Teacher in May 1913 and subsequent correspondence.[16] By this time Empire Day was a well-established event in the school year. Schools could devise their own morning celebrations within the Council's guidelines, with a half-holiday to follow. The editorial drew attention to the wording of a Council circular on celebrations in 'Elementary and Special Schools'. The Council proposals were found acceptable as displaying 'no false note or improper display of jingoism' though the class bias implied in singling out these schools was deplored and spoken of as being 'strongly resented' by teachers.

> Is it suggested that the character of the teaching in these schools is such that a special fillip is needed once a year to remind children of the existence of the Empire? Are the"Elementary and Special School" teachers less patriotic than their colleagues or is the sense of Empire less keen among the working classes who supplied the men who fought, bled and died on the battlefields of South Africa? If Empire Day is a good thing for the"Elementary and Special Schools" it should be a good thing for all schools.

The children and teachers in these schools, the article continued, did not need 'a special dose of imperial physic to stimulate a feeble patriotic spirit'. The wording was either an unfortunate lapse or an example of snobbishness to be corrected as soon as possible. 'The Empire Day celebration will gain considerably when it is felt that it is not being specially organised for the "lower orders" and their teachers.' The article then underlined the dislike felt for false and selfish notions of patriotism by drawing attention to the growth of friendship between nations,

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15 Handbook to the School Calendar Prepared under the direction of the Education Committee of the London County Council (London 1910).

16 The London Teacher Vol.30, No.375, 16 May 1913, 387.

referring to the *Entente Cordiale*, to better relations with Russia and to the 'hundred years' peace' with the United States.[17] It ended, significantly, 'Such sentiments are not inappropriate to the most patriotic celebration of Empire Day which should not pass, we think, without some effort on our part to convince the German people that we wish to cultivate with them only the warmest friendship'.[18] In the same week and in those following several letters appeared critical of the whole celebration. One writer protested against

> the absurd and to me, shameful performance ... Most of our elementary school children are too young to have formed for themselves any very clear idea of what "patriotism" should mean, and they go merrily through the whole business delighted to sing and wave flags and wear coloured ribbons etc. ... It (Empire Day) can only tend to impress on the minds of children that "patriotism" means a noisy and eternal lauding to the skies of our country right or wrong, wise or foolish, just or grasping and selfish.[19]

Was Empire Day, asked another 'an attempt on the part of the ruling classes ... to try and impress on the minds of children of the lower classes at the most impressionable age that all is well under the British flag and in this way postpone the day when class privileges and prejudices will have to go?' A third questioned whether the whole business had any effect on children at all. It may have been a matter of prudence that all three critical letters were written under pseudonyms,[20] unlike a furious signed response attacking such attitudes and concluding 'I would so train my lads that when they reach manhood they should say "Here we are, take us, give us guns and train us in the service of our country - let us set the seal on our manhood"'.[21]

In its statements on Empire Day the Education Authority in no way discriminated against girls, nor did appeals to duty and service at all

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17 The 1812-1814 war between Britain and the USA was ended by the Treaty of Ghent 1814.

18 The London Teacher 16 May 1913, 387.

19 *Ibid.*, 404.

20 Signed respectively "A London Teacher", "MLTA" and "BA Lond".

21 The London Teacher 30 May 1913, 448.

conflict with the content of moral training considered appropriate for them. But implicitly it was a celebration for the boys, who might identify with the explorers, navigators, colonisers and soldiers of the history books. An incident early in 1914 made this bias explicit provoking some bitter protests in the feminist press. The League of Empire, founded in 1891 and closely associated with the origins of Empire Day, had for several years held an annual parade in Hyde Park in which both girls' and boys' organisations had taken part. In April 1914 however, the organisers were informed that if girls were present certain organisations of men and boys would refuse to be represented. The suffragist journal Common Cause reported the matter and quoted a letter to the press in which the boys' 'amazing arrogance' had been defended in these terms

> I think that the Empire Day parade would command greater attention as a demonstration of Young England prepared to undertake their role in the national defence, if the girls were eliminated ... the youth of this country are desirous of taking part in serious training and have no wish to be scorned as if playing at the game, which may be associated (sic) if the girls are present.

The Committee of the League admitted receiving letters of protest from the girls' organisations and recognised the justice of their claim, but nevertheless had agreed to their exclusion. Common Cause retorted 'The display in Hyde Park is symbolic. Of what is it a symbol? Of an Empire in which one sex exploits another, where vulgar display and conceit take the place of heroism and discipline, and where services to the Empire are only recognised if they are done to the sound of a drum'.[22] Nina Boyle,[23] writing in The Vote, organ of the Women's Freedom League, quoted an even more brutally dismissive comment on the incident from The Globe

> To the average boy, girls are redundant and detrimental excrescences in the scheme of things and their intrusion in a public

22 'Empire Day and the Daughters of the Empire', The Common Cause of Humanity Weekly paper of the National Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, Vol.6, 149.

23 Nina Boyle (1866-1943), Militant but non-violent suffragette, and leading member of the Women's Freedom League. Active in the campaign against injustices to women and children in the law courts and in the promotion of women police.

> parade, is for him, simply to reduce the event to a nursery level. The member of a boys' brigade takes himself seriously and he feels that the dignity of his movement is offended by the implication that it is a mere game at which the girls can play as well as he. More than the most bigoted anti-suffragist the average boy believes that women's place is in the home.

Nina Boyle added bitterly 'Not one of the great vehicles of "public opinion" has had a word of sympathy or encouragement for the girls' brigades or of rebuke for the boys'.[24]

Apart from celebrations on Empire Day itself the London Authority proposed some linkage with routine school lessons. It was suggested to teachers that lessons in history, geography and literature might in the previous week be related to the theme of empire and some schools followed this advice.[25] History lessons were an obvious vehicle for the purpose but there were indications not only before but also early in the war of a guarded attitude towards any crude exploitation of the subject for patriotic or imperial propaganda. A London conference on the teaching of history in elementary schools had reported in 1911. Drawn up by a team of practising teachers the report clearly stated the opposition to attempts to spell out for pupils the lessons of history.

> The deductions which the pupil makes from history are more effective than the organised admonitions of bureaucratic preceptors. Real patriotism cannot be made to order; and we doubt the need as much as we distrust the wisdom of such an adventitious aid to political propaganda in the British Empire as a strained interpretation of historical truth.[26]

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24 The Vote 8 May 1914, quoting The Globe 30 April 1914. J. D. Springhall (ed.), Sure and Steadfast : A History of the Boys' Brigade 1883-1983 (London and Glasgow 1983) does not mention this incident. He gives the figure of some 4,000 members each by 1914 for the Girls' Guildry (founded 1900) and the Girls' Life Brigade (1902). In his Coming of Age : Adolescence in Britain 1860-1960 (London 1986) Springhall refers to 'the near absence of detailed studies of teenage girls' leisure both in the present and in the past'. See Chapter I i n.27.

25 Minutes of the LCC Education Committee, Vol.1, 1909, 976. One such was Credon Road School GLRO EO/DIV7/CRE/LB/8.

26 Report of a Conference on the Teaching of History in the London Elementary Schools (LCC Education Committee 1911, Re-issued 1923) 29.

The use of history for training in citizenship was however made explicit.

> Every child in an elementary school has to be educated and to fulfil two functions in life. He will have to earn a livelihood and he will have to perform the duties of a citizen; even under present conditions the girl may have in after life to exercise a municipal vote or serve on Boards of Guardians, County Councils or other local authorities. Now we do not recommend the study of history as a means to a lucrative livelihood; but we do insist upon it as an indispensable element in the training of a citizen and upon this we base our plea for efficient historical teaching and an adequate historical curriculum in elementary schools.[27]

It is noticeable that when the report was reprinted in 1923 the reference to girls remained as it was with neither footnote nor erratum slip to refer to the winning of the limited vote in 1918 nor to the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919.

The London Conference recognised sadly that the gulf between ideal and reality was wide in history lessons while teachers, attempting to teach every subject in the syllabus, had to rely on 'inadequate and misleading sources of information'. A more specific link between history lessons and moral and patriotic teaching was made in 1913 when the Board issued one of its series of revisions of the 1905 Suggestions

> ...for young children it (history) is pre-eminently an instrument for moral training. ... There is no need for the teacher to turn his lessons into sermons; still less should he encourage children to sit in judgement on the great men and nations of the past. If he makes history living to the children they will learn naturally how in many ways the patriot has helped his country and by what sort of actions nations and individuals have earned the gratitude of posterity.[28]

In 1915 the Board's attitude was severely condemned by Lord Cromer, the revised Suggestions being criticised as cautious, feeble and colourless in

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27 Report, *op.cit.*, Introduction, 8.

28 Board of Education Circular 833 1911. 'Suggestions for the consideration of teachers and others concerned in the work of public Elementary Schools' Revised education instalment No.6, 'Suggestions for the Teaching of History' 16.

relation to patriotism, prepared in order to act as an anodyne to 'feeble and weak-kneed patriots fearful of the spectre of militarism'.[29]

Following the outbreak of war there is some evidence from girls' departments' log books of history and geography being adapted to wartime conditions, and existing schemes abandoned in favour of war studies. However while the patriotic uses of literature continued throughout the war, especially in relation to the Shakespeare tercentenary of April 1916, references to war-orientated history and geography virtually ceased by the end of 1915.[30] Outside London one inspector noted that in 1914-1915 'In the upper departments perhaps history teaching suffered most. The teachers rushed into schemes following the course of the war, and their lessons were mere reproductions of newspaper headings which the children knew before they came to school. He added that too much was sacrificed to 'a nebulous War History'.[31] In October 1914 the LCC Chief Education Officer issued suggestions on history and English teaching in relation to the war which included lessons on the recent history of the British Empire and of the main war combatants. The width of the scheme however, and the reading list suggested secondary rather than elementary schools.[32] An approach to a more swaggering posture for girls in wartime came from patriotic songs which recur in The Schoolmistress, such as 'Khaki' and 'Union Jack Ribbon Drill'.[33] The Times Educational Supplement saw less harm in these than in distortions of history.

> It might be thought that there is no harm in teaching children warm, glowing, patriotic history to comfort their little hearts - no more than in teaching them patriotic songs. But the difference is that the

29 Lord Cromer, 'The Teaching of Patriotism' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.83, November 1915, 1016-1020.

30 See for example GLRO EO/DIV1/WOR/LB/10; EO/DIV5/SME/LB/5; EO/DIV3/GRA/LB/4.

31 Annual Report of the Board of Education 1914-1915 [Cd.8274] 1916 'Effect of the War on the Schools' 10-14.

32 The Teaching of History and English as affected by the European Crisis : Some Suggestions for Instruction issued by the London County Council October 1914.

33 'Patriotic Supplement', The Schoolmistress 15 October 1914.

> patriotic song is what it pretends to be and the patriotic history is not ... As for patriotism if it is taught by history written for the purpose it is mere blind arrogance and a danger to the State.[34]

The carrying on by teachers into the war of what might be termed an ardent but unaggressive patriotism must be seen in relation to the passion and violence of anti-German hysteria built up in some sections of the press, notably Horatio Bottomley's John Bull. In his propaganda against the 'Germhuns', Bottomley sharply isolated the German-British conflict, pushing European politics to the sidelines, in writing of the origins of the war. Instigating a furious campaign against any Germans in Britain he denounced the 'Germhun' as 'an unnatural beast - a human abortion - a hellish fiend' fit only for extermination. Prisoners should not be taken. 'Here is an idea for Lord Kitchener : why not arrange to have all German prisoners whom we capture during the war sent over to England via the North Sea in barges propelled from behind by tugs, over the minestrewn areas?'.[35] After the war 'If by chance you should discover one day in a restaurant that you are being served by a German waiter you will throw the soup in his foul face ... '[36] By contrast an editorial in The London Teacher in September 1914 entitled 'Our Place in the Firing Line' referred to teachers having taught peace, respect for other nations, and modesty and restraint over great events in British history 'to keep the minds of the youth of the nation free from an inglorious imperialism'. Teachers should not be reproached for this. 'We have preached peace once and we will do it again', though it was recognised that for the present all effort must go to the conduct of the war.[37]

The Journal of Education took a similar moderate attitude to patriotism and criticised J. W. Gilbert, Chairman of the LCC Education Committee for his proposal that after the death of Lord Roberts in November 1914 the

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34 'History and Patriotism' unsigned editorial, Times Educational Supplement 6 October 1914, 165.

35 John Bull 5 September 1914, 1.

36 Quoted in J. Symons, Horatio Bottomley (London 1955) 166-167.

37 The London Teacher Editorial, 4 September 1914.

panygerics delivered on him in Parliament should be read to schoolchildren. The Journal objected to 'machine-made patriotism' and 'artificially fostered demonstrations by the Education Committee', commenting caustically

> Apparently it never occurred to Mr Gilbert that not a single school child was born when Lord Roberts marched to Kandahar, and not one had left the infant school when he entered Pretoria. That is to say none of them knew anything about Roberts ... The head teachers we may feel sure did not read the speeches to their children ... They told them stories about Roberts's life and achievements.[38]

The article underestimated the weight of the Education Authority's proposals. Certainly, several London girls' departments had the speeches of Lords Kitchener, Crewe and Curzon, Mr Asquith, Mr Bonar Law and Mr Redmond read to them on the day of the funeral, some with talks on Lord Roberts's life as well.[39]

The first Empire Day of the war in 1915 was the occasion for a revised statement from Sir Robert Blair on what sentiments should lie behind its celebration. This was printed and sold for public distribution under the title 'The Rally of the Empire'.[40] Blair's main theme was the response of the different countries of the empire to the war, linking this 'great imperial unity' to the inculcation over previous years of 'a healthy patriotism based on knowledge and understanding'. It was reckoned that some 700,000 children took part in the London school celebrations,[41] and the following Sunday an Empire Day service in St Paul's replaced the usual Hyde Park rallies as more appropriate to a solemn wartime celebration. Lord Meath remained unconvinced that enough was being done, and later that year promoted a debate in the House of Lords on the teaching of patriotism in

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38 Journal of Education 'Occasional Notes' December 1914, 807.

39 Holbeach Road, Credon Road, Munster Road and Rotherhithe New Road schools. GLRO, respectively EO/DIV7/HOL/LB/8; EO/DIV7/CRE/LB/8; EO/DIV1/MUN/LB/8; EO/DIV8/ROT/LB/7.

40 Minutes of the LCC Education Committee 23 June 1915, 769.

41 The Schoolmistress 'Metropolitan Notes' 17 June 1915, 232.

schools for all children over ten. It was a half-hearted affair, Lord Selbourne pointing out for the government that the Board could only advise and suggest, leaving the matter of what was taught to over 300 local education authorities.[42] Meath's lack of confidence in these arrangements was made clear in an address in 1916 to the Imperial Union of Teachers in which he advocated among other changes central control of textbooks and syllabuses and less autonomy for schools.[43] Meath was primarily concerned with neglect of the themes of empire and patriotism rather than with their critics, whose voices were in any case severely muted in wartime. It is worth noting that among the list of film topics banned by the British Board of Film Censors, most of which concerned sex and morals, there appeared 'Subjects dealing with India, in which British officers are seen in an odious light and otherwise attempting to suggest the disloyalty of native states or bringing into disrepute British prestige in the Empire'.[44]

Apart from those critics who were totally opposed to any celebration of the empire, the ceremonies attendant on Empire Day were assailed mainly on two grounds - that they turned an important and serious matter into a mere flag-wagging and pseudo-theatrical occasion, enjoyed as an escape from school routine and the prospect of a half-holiday; and that they were weakened by the inclusion of very young children. Dr F. H. Hayward, who was normally a passionate advocate of ritual celebrations in school as an important part of the educative process, writing twenty years after the end of the war but looking back on over thirty years of Empire Day ceremonies, wrote

> The habit of including mere infants in the ceremonial of Empire Day has led to a garish and superficial treatment of the whole theme; added to this the fact that most children associate the word "Empire" with a local music hall or cinema. No adult can conceive of the mix-

42 20 HL Deb.5S, 23 November 1915.

43 The Schoolmistress 10 August 1916. Meath spoke on 'The Influence of Education on National Ideals'. He also advocated more domestic subjects teaching for girls.

44 Cinema Commission of Inquiry Evidence of T.P. O'Connor MP, 254-255. See Chapter IV ii *supra* for full discussion of the Commission, held under the auspices of the National Council of Public Morals.

> up in many children's minds as they gather at the annual event and are given a flag to wave about.[45]

Writing in the 1930s Hayward deplored the fact that for example with De Valera in control in Ireland and the Union Jack no longer flying there 'on Empire or Commonwealth Day, our children are not informed of the fact and sing about the "dear little shamrock" as lustily as of yore'.[46] It is possible however that half-comprehended or misunderstood ceremonies with their excitement of songs, costumes and recitations had the effect for many small boys and girls of forming a substratum of belief in the Empire as the norm, as a part of life as unassailable as night and day and one in which the rational, unprejudiced understanding which Blair and others worked so hard to promote, had little place.

ii Patriotism in Wartime. Teacher attitudes and Pupil Responses

Hoping to discover how the various influences and teaching in wartime actually affected school children, Dr Kimmins, Chief Inspector of Schools for the London Education Authority, whose survey of attitudes to air raids has been dealt with in a previous chapter,[47] launched his largest experiment in 1915.

> In order to obtain information as to the special interests of London children of different ages in regard to the War, I have had essays written by all the children in ten senior departments (five boys' and five girls') of elementary schools. No preparation was allowed and no notice given. The children were told to write as much as they

45 F. H. Hayward, An Educational Failure (London 1938) 98. Dr Hayward had published two volumes of School Celebrations (London 1919 and 1920) which carried the dedication 'To the Local Education Authorities of Britain'. They gave detailed proposals for the celebration of various great occasions, the purpose being to encourage rhetoric, rhythm, dignity and artistic order which he saw as an element gravely lacking in education.

46 An Educational Failure 23. The title of 'Commonwealth Day' had been introduced in London following the winning of control of the London County Council by Labour in 1934.

47 See Chapter II iii *supra*.

could about the war in fifteen minutes. No child was allowed to exceed the time limit.

In all 3,081 papers were written by 1,511 boys and 1,570 girls. In order to obtain as far as possible the real interests and the ideas of the children, the common material in the various groups indicative of lessons and talks on the subjects by the teachers was carefully eliminated.[48]

He then grouped the results by sex and by age from eight to thirteen years. As the concern of this study is with girls, material from the boys is indicated here only for purposes of comparison, as in the survey on air raids considered earlier. Dr Kimmins found that both girls and boys saw the war in terms of England, Germany and Belgium. There were very few references to other countries, even to France. The emphasis on Belgium, especially by the girls, was partly because of their greater concern with the suffering caused by the war and probably also a result of the presence of Belgian refugee children in school.

Leaving aside the eight year-olds, whose contributions were too disjointed to be of much significance, the nine year-old girls, unlike the boys, made very few references to the fighting and did not mention names of soldiers or battles. They dwelt mainly on the suffering caused by the war, cruelties to English prisoners, the dearness of food, and making things for soldiers ... 'There is much in the essays about Red Cross nurses. Constant references are made to the wounded soldiers e.g., "The dying soldiers will never see the beautiful spring".' But by ten years of age Kimmins noted a great advance, with the record of unrelated events replaced by more or less definite opinions with regard to the war. The most surprising change was the sudden bellicose attitude of girls, who even wished to enter into personal conflict with the Kaiser.

> ...(she) rejoices at the news of any heavy losses by the Germans e.g., "The war is getting very nice now; the English are killing thousands of Germans". She is now keen on recruiting and thinks it is a

48 C. W. Kimmins, 'The Special Interests of Children in the War at different Ages' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.3, No.3, 6 December 1915, 145-152.

> glorious thing to die for one's country ... She still expresses great sympathy with those who have suffered from the war especially with the Belgians, and occasionally with the German mothers. Her general attitude at this age is, however, that no suffering should deter us from continuing the fight until victory is won.

This bellicose attitude was taken up by the eleven year-old boys, whose attitude was very like that of the girls of ten in their impulsive desire to fight. The eleven year-old girl, by contrast, was no longer so warlike. Kimmins noted depression over the suffering of soldiers and anxiety over shortages of food. The interest of some in the Dardanelles campaign was clearly due to the belief that success there could mean cheaper food. The pugnacious attitude had almost entirely disappeared and there were very few expressions of personal antagonism to the Kaiser.

> Girls of this age also think about the origin of the war, and their accounts are generally more intelligible than those of the boys. However here, as with the boys, very absurd statements are made e.g., (1) "The war was declared because the Prince and Princess of Australia were killed"; (2) "The Emperor of Germany insulted Queen Victoria when he was at Windsor, and King Edward smacked him round the face; he said he would be avenged"; and (3) "The war began because the Kaiser wanted England for his own, but our King would not let him have it, so he said 'I shall fight you'".

At twelve the survey found that girls' attitudes had changed considerably. The depression, so marked at eleven, was replaced by a growing pride of race. 'Such expressions as "I would not like to be a German; I am proud to think I am an English girl" are characteristic. Now and then there are bursts of anger ... but they are infrequent'. For both girls and boys at this stage 'the most striking advance ... is that the opinions expressed are as a rule no longer *ex parte* statements. There is now a definite balance to be observed. Evidence is weighed and the pros and cons are compared'. Thus girls discussed the advantages and disadvantages of war, seeing among the latter the chances of remaining unmarried for want of men. They considered the likelihood of success in

the war, for the first time mentioning a specific battle - of Ypres, and displayed greater interest in the war's main outlines.

At thirteen 'The most significant feature of this age is the general increase in the maturity of ideas which is quite remarkable for young children'. In this respect Kimmins found the girls considerably in advance of the boys.

> The girls refer particularly to the moral fall of Germany in breaking all the rules of warfare ... There are many expressions of pride in England and much general evidence of a fine spirit of patriotism. There are fewer references now to the dearness of food or the sufferings of soldiers. The girl of this age prefers to look at the effect the war will have upon the future of England and of other nations engaged, e.g., "Turkey has gone to her doom". She is particularly anxious that full justice shall be done to Belgium ... She realises the magnitude of the war and that it will probably last a long time e.g., (1) "There will never be such a war again"; (2) "The horror of this dreadful war makes me shudder and hope that it will soon come to an end"; (3) "This war is like a second battle of Waterloo".

The mention of Waterloo may refer to teaching arising from Blair's Empire Day circular for 1915 noted above in which he drew a parallel with the Napoleonic wars likely to have been picked up by teachers.[49]

Not surprisingly Dr Kimmins gave no indication of which schools were involved, though presumably it would have vitiated his experiment, on the findings of which he addressed the Psychology Section of the British Association,[50] had he not used a balanced sample from a variety of areas. His analysis of results in relation to girls is an important comment on the conflict of views considered in Chapter III i *supra* as to whether the older girls should have their interests and energies increasingly narrowed to domestic concerns or should have every opportunity to widen their education in its brief concluding years.

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49 See *supra*, n.40.

50 He addressed the British Association meeting in Manchester in September 1915.

There is no comparable general survey embracing the eight to thirteen year-olds from later in the war. As mentioned earlier there is an indication that Dr Kimmins hoped to conduct another air-raid survey for these age groups in 1917 but seems to have been unable to do so.[51] He did, however, examine in detail 1340 essays written for the Junior County Scholarship examination set in November 1915 on how children could help in time of war.[52] Here he was dealing with children aged between ten and eleven. They were of course a picked group of the most promising pupils in terms of ability and probably also of behaviour. Judging from the suggestions for helping quoted in the survey they were certainly not from the poorer families. He was impressed by the 'excellent spirit' of the children, by their 'extraordinary ingenuity in thinking out ways to economize', and the 'great enthusiasm and ... intelligent thought' in the matter of helping. He noted also 'fundamental differences in the attitude of boys and girls at this age which were absolutely independent of school conditions'. The subject was one likely to produce moralising, not to say priggish, proposals particularly from the girls, as for example 'If you make a silly mistake in arithmetic or any other lesson, when you get home tell your mother not to let you have any jam or butter for tea, but save the money for the War Loan' or 'Give up such luxuries as perfumes, sweets and cakes. Perfumes do you no good, and sweets and cakes may cause indigestion'. Over luxuries the boys were more realistic. 'Only buy sweets when you feel that you simply cannot do without them' is described by Kimmins as a typical comment. He drew attention to the highly critical attitude of the girls towards the boys produced by their superiority in ways of showing off their patriotic activity.

> Girls were very severe in their references to the boys' inability to knit and think that only the cleverest boys could possibly do it; e.g., "Boys who are a little more forward than the others might help with the knitting". Another goes so far as to suggest a division of labour

51 There is a reference to this attempt in the Log Book for Rosebery Avenue School GLRO EO/DIV3/ROS/LB/3.

52 C. W. Kimmins, 'An Investigation of London Children's ideas as to how they can help in time of War' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.4, No.2, June 1917, 80-87.

> that "As the girls are engaged in knitting, the boys might do their part by praying for the success of our arms" ... Throughout the essays the girls are far more critical of boys' work than the boys that of girls.

Some of the girls' sharpest criticisms of boys concerned disobedience and here there was a striking difference in attitudes. At eleven years old

> boys and girls are as far apart as the poles in their attitude to obedience. Throughout the papers the girls insist on the value of obedience, not only in making the affairs of life work without friction, but also in producing that happiness and feeling of satisfaction which only obedience can bring ... The boy's attitude is absolutely different. He regards obedience as a necessity and adopts it as a war measure, but he never refers to any resulting peace of mind as a consequence.[53]

Kimmins ended his analysis of these papers by quoting extracts on the importance of English boys and girls working hard at school in order to become better educated than German children. Some of these ran

> "If we work hard at school and become clever a nation would think twice about invading England"; "We are the rising generation. England wants boys and girls to be like Drake and Florence Nightingale"; "We children will have to put this country right after the war so we must work hard and become well educated".[54]

Such sententious comments in a highly competitive scholarship examination are important primarily as a reflection of teacher attitudes. Whether or not the children concerned seriously believed them, they probably represented the insistent message of many class and head teachers to whom the enormous emphasis on duty and self-sacrifice which was pressed on children provided both a useful moral adjunct to school discipline and a modifying influence against the savagery of sections of the press. In the Chief Examiner's report on these 1915-1916 papers one assistant examiner commented 'I was impressed by the absence of bitterness or adverse reflection upon our enemies. Not a single expression

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53 All references from Kimmins *op.cit.*

54 Kimmins, *ibid.*

of hatred occurred; on the contrary many advocated prayer for our enemies'.[55]

The 1916-1917 Junior County Scholarship examination included a composition question that touched on more fundamental attitudes towards the war. The children were asked to describe a meeting between an old soldier back on leave from the trenches and a young recruit just going out. Part of the report ran

> Certain it is that the facts of war had come over very closely to the children and that the majority if they would not realise its most tragic aspects, were deeply impressed with its hard realities, as opposed to the glamour which usually surrounds warfare in the eyes of children. The theme indeed of the majority of the dialogues was just this contrast between glamour and reality as reproduced in the mental attitudes of the recruit and the war-hardened soldier. Many of the children handled not unskilfully a dialogue in which the young recruit, athirst for glory and inclined to treat too lightheartedly the sterner aspects of trench warfare is brought to his senses by his comrade's revelations ... In another type of dialogue occurring not quite so frequently the recruit is taken to task by the older soldier in neglecting for so long to obey the call of duty ... The sense of duty fulfilled was present to the children's minds as a compensation for the hardships of the soldier's life - separation from home, probable wounds and possible death. The strength of family ties, the joy of returning home, the bond of friendship existing between comrades in arms were all themes which frequently recurred.[56] Hatred or abuse of the enemy were conspicuously absent. Deeds of heroism in the field were, as might be expected, frequently dilated upon; yet it can hardly be said that for the majority (even of the boys) these were the most engrossing lesson of the war.

He referred to an assistant examiner's comment, which he considered to be valid for possibly a majority, certainly a considerable section, of the children. This examiner had referred to the 'high moral tone' in dealing

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55 Report of the Chief Examiner on the examinations held in November and December 1915 for the Award of Junior County Scholarships (LCC 1916). Comment is from Assistant examiner Mr Ayers, 14.

56 *Idem.*, 1916-1917. Later in this report came the comment 'Joy at father's homecoming from the trenches was often expressed by the girls; boys were silent on this point - was there a reason ?'.

with the war shown in 1915-1916 and then added that there was evidence of some war-weariness. While 'do your bit' was still a constant refrain, complaints about the drudgery, the filth, the vermin and the recommendations to dodge it, side by side with absence of feeling for the sufferings of all combatants alike conveyed to him the impression that feelings had become blunted. He continued

> I have heard criticisms of the subject to the effect that it is wrong to invite children to discuss one so harrowing. The thousand essays I have read did not confirm this. In only one case was there a reference that could be so construed "I cannot tell you any more it is too terrible". But in the rest I looked in vain for repugnance for the subject; instead there was certainly zest in describing the tanks, the deeds of heroism, the need for "Keatings" or the qualms of the raw recruit. The children have got accustomed to war and the result is a blunting of emotion and a dulling of imagination.[57]

He observed that the girls naturally dealt with the domestic side better than the boys, but on the fighting tended to idealise and write literary essays. The boys' compositions on the other hand were convincingly true to nature. This last comment may be illustrated from two brief extracts from girls' essays and one from that of a boy.

> Girl's essay (extract)
> Jim (new recruit) : "I wish I were you, I'm longing to go out."
> Tom (old soldier) : "Ah, it's a hard life my lad. I thought like you when I first joined, but it's lost its charm for me. Days and days in trenches full of water and up to your neck in mud. And then it's awful to see the poor fellows falling all round, and you can't lift a finger to help them ... The sounds too are awful, the boom of the guns, the groans of the dying, the shrieks and cries of horses, all mingled together is dreadful. Ah! my boy you will soon change your opinion of war when you've had a taste of it."[58]

> Girl's essay (extract)
> The recruit opened the conversation saying "I suppose you have seen many terrible doings in France have you not?". "I have" replied the soldier "I have experienced many horrors the like of which I never want to again. Men and women shot in cool (sic) blood.

57 Chief Examiner's Report *op.cit.*, 27-29.
58 *Ibid.*, 18.

Heroes dying for the sake of their countries. It seemed as if God had forsaken that desolate land and that Satan had shifted his abode thence. I could relate many a heart-rending story, but I do not want the people of this land to know many of the horrors of that land."[59]

The boy's essay is a sharp contrast :

(extract)
On looking at the soldier the recruit uttered a cry of amazement "Can I believe my eyes it is Fred" he gasped. "All right old boy" said the other "don't look so scared. I am not his ghost". "Well I gave you up as lost" replied the recruit. "Yes" said Fred "I was nearly lost. My helmet was blown off and a bullet passed right through my clothes and would have struck my heart had my old fag case not stopped it" ... "Soldiering is a hard life Fred" said the new soldier. "That fellow Barnes the sergeant is an awful bully. Once I saved him from drowning and the next day he reported me for being ten minutes late for roll call". "Well" said Fred "I know a worse case than that. During the fighting at Neauve Chappele (sic) our major was stunned and a soldier picked him up and was wounded three times. Once he accidently trod on his face and next day he was called on to answer a charge of court martial for treading on the major's face.".[60]

It was probably in relation to the boys' essays that one examiner commented on descriptions of the battlefield 'Many details are given that are kept out of the Press'.

In 1918 an assistant examiner, reporting for the same examination on an essay not directly connected with the war, commented 'answers revealed the struggle in the home and a consciousness of the pressures of present-day life. A rather pathetic feature was the oldness of these mere babies. They have become old by real experience and their work indicated that they know all too well what this war means to the home'.[61] Even in homes well above the very poorest the day-to-day strain was likely to fall most heavily on the younger girls with both mother and older sisters frequently at work for long hours. In 1917 a correspondent for The Schoolmaster

59 Chief Examiner's Report *op.cit.*, 19-20.
60 *Ibid.*, 21.
61 Chief Examiner's Report for 1917-1918. Comment from Assistant Examiner Miss Waters.

writing in 'The London Schoolmistress' column pointed out the double loss for many children, with fathers in the army and mothers, unable to manage on the Army allowance, forced to seek work.

> The money she is able to earn is not sufficient to provide a capable substitute in the house, as apart from her home-making capacity she probably ranks as an unskilled worker. Owing to the heavy prices of foodstuffs home management requires considerably more instead of less foresight than before the war, if the children's health is to be maintained at a satisfactory level. While there are such insistent calls for the labour of women, it should not be forgotten that in too many instances when the mother passes from the home to the factory the children are paying a very heavy price in loss of comfort and happiness.[62]

The school log books for 1918 confirm the burden on the daughter still at school either looking after children at home while the mother queued for food or taking a turn in the queue herself.[63]

While Empire Day and the enlistment of school subjects to war-related themes may have had little more than a residual effect, the powerful moral message of the war for the girls - as future non-combatants - in terms of duty and self-sacrifice was conveyed and sustained above all by the war work undertaken in school. Beyond the importance of any actual output of garments for refugees, knitting for soldiers, hospitality for the wounded, collections for war charities and similar causes, was the impact on the children of such work in humanising and personalising the immensity of the war. From London records it is clear that this work in elementary schools could put a heavy burden on overworked staff and was often undertaken in peculiarly difficult circumstances. Inspectors and education officials insisted on routine standards of work and administration being kept up in wartime; staff shortages were at times acute with head teachers driven distracted between urgent administrative tasks and coverage of

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62 Unsigned short article on "Children and War conditions", 'The London Schoolmistress' occasional column, The Schoolmaster 14 April 1917, 470.

63 See for example GLRO EO/DIV3/POP/LB/7 Log Book for Popham Road School and EO/DIV6/RAN/LB/7, *idem.*, Randall Place School.

classes without teachers; fuel shortages could make classrooms in a crowded school almost uninhabitable.[64] Meanwhile collections for charities or for purchase of materials were often measured in pupils' farthings. Nevertheless war work was carried on in some schools with an intensity that only an examination of the details can reveal.

Sleaford Street School in Clapham for example was a poor school in a deprived area.[65] It received parcels of clothing from the more prosperous Wix's Lane School in the same division.[66] At Sleaford Street boots were supplied, free of charge or for a small sum, by the Ragged School Union, and Boot Money regularly collected. Much remedial work was undertaken and an inspector's report of 1914 commented 'Their environment being considered, the appearance, attitude and behaviour of the girls afford striking evidence of the good influence of the department'. The Chairman of Managers was Mrs Charlotte Despard, a formidable suffrage activist and founder of the Women's Freedom League. Before and early in the war she had been deeply involved in school feeding and other welfare work in Nine Elms, one of the poorest areas of Battersea.[67]

It was at her suggestion that the school's war work was concentrated on relief for British prisoners of war in Germany, which records from other schools suggest was a relatively neglected area of work early in the war. Headmistress and staff agreed that contact should be built up with prisoner relatives and friends of the families who had children at either department of the school. This local approach led to a strong response from parents

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64 GLRO EO/DIV2/GRE/LB/7 on inspectors critical of work methods, October 1915.
GLRO EO/DIV8/SNO/LB/2 irregularities in register keeping censured, May 1918.
GLRO EO/DIV4/HAM/LB/4 acute staff shortages, April 1918.
GLRO EO/DIV2/NER/LB/6 rejection of Head's plea to close school on account of extreme cold, February 1917.

65 GLRO EO/DIV9/SLE/LB/4.

66 GLRO EO/DIV9/WIX/LB/4. An Inspector's report for 1915 notes 'The children are of a superior class. There is great competition for admission'.

67 Charlotte Despard, 1844-1939. Founded the Women's Freedom League 1907. See Andrö Linklater, An Unhusbanded Life : Charlotte Despard, Suffragette, Socialist and Sinn Feiner (London 1980).

and pupils and absorbed the school's war activity to November 1916. The number of prisoners with whom they were in contact grew from 12 to 33, a regular monthly tally of about 50 parcels was dispatched and replies received. The scheme ended in sadness when the Central Prisoners of War Committee informed them that from December 1916 all parcels would be pooled and go through the central organisation. 'I am afraid' wrote the Headmistress 'that this new rule will adversely affect us. It is the personal, the family touch that has kept up enthusiasm here ... neither parents nor children are ready to subscribe liberally for the benefit of strangers - wrong perhaps but natural.'. To keep up the momentum it was decided without delay to divert efforts to the local Cedars Road Auxiliary Military Hospital, and in January 1917 'Twenty-five men, many of them sadly broken, were entertained today by the girls who were so proud to be the hostesses to those who have done so much for us ... The staff prepared a sumptuous tea'. These invitations continued throughout spring and summer and were extended by the winter of 1917-1918 to Anzac troops in Tooting Hospital, some of them described by the Head as 'terribly maimed'.[68]

Sleaford Road School may have been exceptional in its efforts and certainly was in the detail of records, though a number of other log books reveal the extent and variety of work. Munster Road School for example[69] concentrated relief work on a local camp for Belgian refugees in particular, the children sending consignments of new and mended garments and collecting over £6 by means of teachers and girls agreeing not to buy Christmas cards. France was given a rare mention with a French flag day for 14 July 1915. Several hundred French flags were made, one being presented to every girl who had contributed anything from a farthing upwards to the appeal, which raised £1. 6s. 2d. By 1916-1917 the Belgian concern was giving way to the making of 'kits' for Serbian children and to entertainment for local wounded soldiers. The good effect on the girls was

68 All references from the 'Miscellaneous' section of the school Log Book.

69 GLRO EO/DIV1/MUN/LB/8.

often mentioned. Thus the Head of Netherwood Street School wrote in December 1915

> In order to encourage talent and good feeling for Xmas and as a slight acknowledgement of the thoughtfulness of the children for the wounded soldiers in saving £3. 1s. 6d. of their sweet money, I have allowed them to spend the morning in singing, music, games and playing with toys etc. Very many children have fathers and brothers as soldiers.[70]

Holbeach Road School in Lewisham spread its activities widely. An itemised total of over a thousand articles went off by March 1915 to the Town Hall collection directed to 'men on board HMS Forward', to minesweepers via the Shipwrecked Mariners' Society, to fathers of pupils fighting in France and to local hospitals. The Headmistress emerges as a vigorous woman not only in the amount of war work done and recorded, but in promoting close involvement with parents to combat 'the lawlessness of some few girls during the fathers' absence' and in school policy during daytime air raids. Immediately following the Armistice she involved the boys' department in a patriotic exercise.

> In order to fix in the girls' minds the memorable scene when the German admiral and others visited Admiral Beatty on board HMS Queen Elizabeth to hear the latter's plans for obeying the terms of the Armistice, a model of the flagship was arranged and 12 boys impersonated the following characters : Admiral Beatty; Admiral of the Fleet; Captain of the Queen Elizabeth; three British Marines; Admiral Meurer; Commander of a Zeppelin; Commander of a submarine; a Quartermaster; a stoker; an engineer. Boys acted the parts while the Headmistress described the scenes from the morning newspaper.[71]

This was an unusually active reaction to the Armistice. Some log books did not mention it at all while others referred to a brief assembly or service and to the girls' reactions of excitement or emotion.

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70 GLRO EO/DIV2/NER/LB/6.
71 GLRO EO/DIV7/HOL/LB/5.

The Board of Education Annual Reports were greatly shortened during the war, but that for 1914-1915 was sufficiently full to allow space for a general appraisal of the effects of the war on the schools based on a number of Inspectors' reports. It was claimed that 'the gain to the corporate life of the schools is incalculable' and on the teaching of patriotism that 'the inner spirit of patriotism which war evokes is not manifested in uniform courses of dogmatic teaching. The patriotism of our schools embodies itself in concrete forms and attaches itself to persons and institutions; it rarely becomes explicit in verbal formulae'.[72] The inspectors' comments were drawn from the whole country and from both boys' and girls' schools, but the conclusions above could well be applied to the attitudes and to the work undertaken in the girls' departments of the London elementary schools. As well as maintaining a moderate non-jingoist attitude to the war, many teachers sought to involve patriotism deeply with those moral qualities for girls on which so much contemporary emphasis was laid. In his analysis, referred to above, of the essays on how girls and boys could help in wartime, Dr Kimmins noted in relation to help for war victims

> The girls write much on the various ways in which help may be given to wounded soldiers. They evidently delight in doing kindly acts, and are happy when helping to provide or take part in entertainments for the wounded ... The boy approves but does not enter into the spirit of the thing to the same extent as the girl. One boy says : "Children can look after wounded soldiers and take them into the park to listen to the feathered songsters"; and again : "We should visit wounded soldiers because they are tired of seeing so many grown-up people out at the Front". He does these things willingly but his heart is not in it. It is quite different with the girl.[73]

With the ending of the war the concentration on war work could have no follow-up. It had been a useful adjunct to conventional moral training, had added a temporary spice to the drudgery of school needlework lessons and

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72 'Effect of the War on the Schools' Annual Report of the Board of Education 1914-1915 [Cd.8274] 1916, 10-14.

73 C. W. Kimmins, 'An Investigation of London Children's Ideas as to how they can help in time of War' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.4, No.2, 5 June 1917, 80-87.

allowed the girls a passing sense of superiority to the boys. One more lasting lesson perhaps, through contact with the wounded, had been to emphasise for some girls the direct consequences of the war. Mothercraft studies in elementary schools, discussed in a previous chapter[74] had also acquired a strongly patriotic gloss during the war as part of the drive against infant mortality rates, though the concern of teachers and education authorities to avoid any possible connection with sex education meant that the duty of girls to replace the dead through motherhood was not one that could be emphasised in the elementary schools. Marriage and motherhood as a patriotic duty could only be referred to in the most general terms through the indirect agency of domestic studies, and by no means all headmistresses were anxious to impress on twelve and thirteen year-old girls the importance of their future family duties.

Theodora Bonwick, suffrage activist and sex education pioneer, writing shortly before the war in Sylvia Pankhurst's Women's Dreadnought had referred to the various ways in which a sense of inferiority was drummed into girls 'at school she learns of citizenship but not for her'.[75] For boys the relationship between patriotism and future citizenship was a commonplace but there are indications that for girls the assumptions of the narrow domestic role would die as hard in this sphere as in any. Reference has already been made to the report of the 1911 conference on history teaching which, when re-issued in 1923, made no mention in a highly relevant paragraph of the changes brought about by recent legislation in the position of women as citizens and of girls as future citizens.[76] In 1920 an even clearer indication of unchanged attitudes had been expressed in an article for a teacher readership by the Master of Balliol, published in the Journal of Experimental Pedagogy. Entitled 'The Training of the Citizen' it discussed the concept of patriotism and how far it could be 'taught'.

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74 See Chapter III ii *supra*.

75 T. Bonwick, 'What the Child should know' Women's Dreadnought 8 July 1914. The paper was the organ of the East London Federation of Suffragettes.

76 See *supra*, 184.

surveying to what extent the inculcation of patriotic attitudes had been successful during the war. The article was written entirely in terms of men and boys, apart from one brief perfunctory paragraph.

> After all that can be said about boys, the training of girls remains *the* important thing. Nations depend on the mothers of the race; the fundamental duties of improving her physique, saving infant life, acquiring practical arts, appeal at once to girls; the teaching of temperance, thrift, patriotism is to them the obvious thing to do. It is truly said : "This war has discovered women".[77]

To have spoken of the training of girls as 'the least important thing' might have been a more honest, if unacceptably cynical formulation. The subsequent sentences were no more than stock eugenist-inspired platitudes, representing no advance, in spite of the final statement, on attitudes current before the war.

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77 The Master of Balliol (A.L. Smith), 'The Training of the Citizen' Journal of Experimental Pedagogy Vol.5, No.4, March 1920, 159-167.

VI Girls leaving school, and early work experience

i Attempts to direct and control young workers

The welfare of adolescent girls and boys, in particular of young wage-earners, gave rise to intense concern and scrutiny from educationists and moralists in the pre-war years, and indeed before 1900. Some of the reasons for this concern discussed in earlier chapters included the pervasive insistence on national efficiency with its eugenic-directed emphasis on the well-being of future generations, alarm at the results of more relaxed school discipline following the ending of the Revised Code, the rapid expansion of the cinema with its presumed ill effects on young people and the drift of girls away from the control exercised by domestic service - a drift exacerbated by the war, but pre-dating it.

The retention of some control over young adolescents in work by forms of part-time continued education was fully discussed in a major symposium of 1907 edited by Michael Sadler[1] and by a Consultative Committee which reported in 1909.[2] The inclusion of compulsory day continuation classes in the education bill of 1917 following recommendations of the Lewis Committee Report,[3] was to intensify public discussion, though enthusiasm for Fisher's bold initiative was soon tempered by criticism both from employers, and from sections of the labour movement who saw the proposals as an attempt to avoid commitment to the raising of the school-leaving age and the ultimate objective of secondary education for all. H. Hendrick in his perceptive analysis of the continuation school debate[4] between 1900 and 1922,

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1 M. Sadler (ed.), Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere (Manchester 1907).

2 Consultative Committee Report on Attendance (compulsory or otherwise) at Continuation Schools [Cd.4757] 1909.

3 Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War [Cd.8512] 1917. Hereafter referred to as The Lewis Committee Report.

4 H. Hendrick, 'A Race of intelligent unskilled Labourers. The adolescent Worker and the debate on Compulsory Part-time Day Continuation Schools 1900-1922' History of Education Vol.9, No.2, Spring 1980, 157-173.

suggests three major advantages which it was hoped would emerge from such schooling - the guidance and formation of individual character, the fostering of adaptability in the young workforce which, by reducing the likelihood of unemployment and the attraction of casual labour, would help towards stability of family life, and the promotion of good citizenship. While the title of Hendrick's article, apart from the ambiguous word 'labourer' is not gender-specific, he ignores altogether the girl adolescent worker. Two other recent studies of the day continuation experiment are both primarily concerned with the political conflicts and economic constraints surrounding their emergence and decline, rather than with the potential pupils.[5]

The Select Committee Report of 1909 reckoned that of the rather over two million fourteen to seventeen year-olds, more or less equally divided between the sexes, three quarters were under no educational care. 'It is impossible to suppose that any school training however successful would not leave many boys and girls in sore need of further discipline and training during the important years which follow the day school period'. Similar general sentiments, differently phrased, for example the danger of abandoning the young 'to the unholy trinity of Mammon, Bacchus and Priapus'[6] recur before and during the war, the tone ranging from sympathetic concern[7] to censorious moralising[8] and calls for disciplinary control.[9]

Sadler's symposium, published the year before his two volume survey on Moral Education, examined the various forms of post-school education

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5 D. W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation Experiment' History of Education Vol.4, No.1, Spring 1975, 36-50.
B. Doherty, 'Compulsory Day Continuation Education. An Examination of the 1918 Experiment' The Vocational Aspect Vol.18, No.39, Spring 1966, 41-56.

6 'Lens', 'Nurtural Eugenics' New Statesman 26 February 1916, 489.

7 For example Miss M.L.Wilkins, 'Welfare Work with Young Employees' Child Study Vol.10, No.2, April 1917, 44.

8 E. Sellers, 'Boy and Girl War Products' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.84, October 1918, 702-716.

9 "A Correspondent", 'Wage-earning girls' Times Educational Supplement 5 July 1917, 259.

available and assessed their effectiveness, drawing comparisons with provision in various west European countries and with the United States. While covering a number of other topics, in particular night schools for adults, full-time trade schools, and apprenticeships, contributors tackled the major issues that agitated educationists over the elementary school leaver's part-time education. These could be summed up as : the extent to which classes held in the evening were useful or appropriate for the young wage earner; the issue of compulsion which had to be seen in relation to the tangle of local variations and exemptions governing the school leaving age; the claims of general as against vocational education; the possibility of maintenance allowances to set against loss of earnings, and the probable attitude of employers. Discussion of this last issue included material gathered from experiments made by a small number of philanthropic employers to give young employees something more than purely vocational instruction. Sadler, in a concluding article[10] on the compulsion question deplored the lack of adequate statistics on school leavers and continuation class attendance. 'As things are we cannot measure with any precision the growth or decline in the number of those in attendance at continuation schools during the years which follow the close of the day school course'. He gave encouraging reports of attempts 'to mortise the work of the continuation classes to public elementary day schools' and of improved employer response in some counties, but had to admit that in the great majority of English towns such classes were in a disappointing state with most employers and parents still indifferent. After much discussion on the evils for boys of no continued education Sadler turned to the girls, with the artless remark that 'male administrators are a little apt to overlook them'. He quoted at length Miss Catherine Webb, an ex-secretary of the Women's Industrial Council[11] who two years before had contributed a relevant article to the University Review.

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10 Sadler, *op.cit.*, 689-749.

11 The Women's Industrial Council founded in 1894. For its origins and work see E. Mappen, Helping Women at Work : The Women's Industrial Council 1889-1914 (London 1986).

In Catherine Webb's opinion modern education neither fitted working girls to become the 'helpmeet' of the working man, nor for 'an independent economic and social responsibility'. She saw girls as caught between two strong conflicting pressures.

> In the well-meant desire to promote the physical well-being of the nation, physicians and educationists alike are inclined to insist that willy-nilly working girls must specialise as housewives and mothers, whilst parents still require that they shall become industrial wage earners at the earliest possible age. The consequence is an unrecognised clash of interests between which the child is, in my opinion, likely to suffer unless the normal elementary school life can be made to overlap into the wage-earning period until the girl herself arrives at some intelligent appreciation of the true meaning and intent of education and its bearing upon her future life. This development rarely happens before the age of sixteen if as early.

She argued therefore for the compulsory continuation school up to sixteen. All thought of 'sex specialisation' should be banished for those under twelve and 'only introduced in the broadest social sense after that age' to be pursued afterwards in day or evening continuation school.[12]

Sadler did not follow up these specific points on bridging what Catherine Webb referred to as 'the present disastrous educational gap between childhood and early womanhood' but concluded his survey of young urban workers of both sexes (conditions in rural work being different enough to need quite separate treatment) by setting out three conditions before the problem of continued education could be solved - limitation of working hours for the juveniles involved; legal obligation on employers with regard to further education; and 'trenchant interference' with certain forms of industry 'parasitic upon the body politic'. He did not specify these except to describe them as involving for girl or boy 'premature strain, arrested education and long hours of deteriorating routine'.[13] Unfortunately a considerable number of trades taking boys and girls at fourteen involved

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12 C. Webb, 'The Need for Compulsory Continuation Schools : A Plea on behalf of Girls' University Review Vol.3, No.4, June 1906, 263-268.

13 Sadler *op.cit.*, 709.

some or all of these features, and moreover by making no distinction between girls and boys he avoided discussion of the fact that girls' household duties after a working day could make attendance at evening school too heavy a burden.

The Consultative Committee Report of 1909 covered much the same ground as Sadler's symposium, and laid stress on new developments in the factory system that were 'multiplying opportunities of non-educative employment for both girls and boys during adolescence'. It drew attention to 'signs of an increasing tendency to substitute lower paid girls' labour for that of boys in the supervision of certain machines'. There were, the Report added, indications that

> the factory system is beginning to seize upon the improved human material turned out by the elementary schools. Certain branches of machine production are being organised so as to make profitable the employment of boy and girl adolescent labour in processes which, while demanding some intelligence and previous school training are themselves non-educative and deadening to the mind.

'The moral results' the Report continued, in a phrase which might serve as a text for much of the tension in succeeding years between educational reformers and employers of labour, were 'wholly unrealised by the shareholders'. A section of the Report on the special needs of urban girls emphasised the overriding necessity for training partly because many young women, given the imbalance between the sexes, would have to support themselves and partly because women workers, so often lacking training, tended to be patient and endure helplessly conditions of low pay and sweated labour. Leaving aside the small minority fortunate enough to have attended a full-time trade school, even entry into a skilled trade 'seldom provided workroom conditions which gave a thorough training in a craft'. The 'training' was all too often a matter of picking up the skills as best one could.

The Report also pointed out how the relatively good initial wages sometimes paid for unskilled often monotonous work with no prospect of advancement had an attraction for some young girls. Continuation classes for them should be directed towards developing physique, cultivating higher standards of life and preparing for home duties. Many other girls entered work - domestic service and parts of the dress trade were instanced - where suitable classes could greatly increase skill and earning capacity. The arguments in favour were overwhelming, though very few references were made to the need for maintenance grants if day classes were to be attended.[14] Between 1908 and 1914 no fewer than six bills were introduced on the subject and failed.

The next major official statement on continuation classes, picturesquely described as 'a handrail over the bridge which crosses the perilous waters of adolescence', appeared in the Lewis Committee Report of 1917 and is better considered in relation to the Education Act of 1918 and the experiments of 1921-1922. More important in the scale of attempts to direct and control the young worker was another matter to which the Lewis Committee also drew attention : the establishment in many areas of Juvenile Employment Bureaux following the Labour Exchanges Act of 1909, and of a complementary network of Juvenile Advisory Committees, established by Board of Trade regulations under this Act in conjunction with local education authorities exercising powers under the Education (Choice of Employment) Act of 1910. Some education authorities followed procedures under the latter Act, while others, notably London, devised their own schemes to suit local conditions. Some authorities took no action, an omission deplored in the Lewis Committee's Interim Report of 1917.[15]

In September 1914 an article in The Child discussed the working of the Juvenile Advisory Committees (JACs). They were to consist of

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14 'The Special Needs of Urban Girls' in Consultative Committee Report *op.cit.*, Vol.1, 'Report and Appendices' [Cd.4757] 203.

15 Interim Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in Relation to Employment after the War [Cd.8374] 1917.

representatives of employers, of juvenile labour in the locality and of working people, of teachers and of persons interested in social work with young people. Details of JAC practice varied in different localities but it was normal to have a rota of members operating for the purpose of interviewing parents and children. The meeting of one of these rota committees is a striking example of the new work to which the State in recent years has set its hand. There is no fear of the interview losing its usefulness by parents or child being awed or frightened by the proceedings. They are of the most informal character.'[16]

The London scheme was adapted to suit the size of the Metropolis with its multiplicity of trades and to the Education Authority's existing network of care committees attached to every elementary school and deeply involved in school meal administration and the relief of individual cases of destitution.[17] They were now to take on the work of helping to place children in employment and of providing some after-care. The keystone of the scheme was the Central London Juvenile Advisory Committee set up by the Board of Trade on which sat its representatives as well as those of the London County Council and the Board of Education. The Chairman, R. A. Bray was a prominent and active member of the London Education Committee. By 1914 eighteen local JACs had been set up in London, with members including LCC nominees, employers of labour and other industrial representatives, heads of local schools, and, appointed by the Board of Trade, social workers, members of apprenticeship and of care committees, and representatives of local clubs. The key figures in this London network were twelve full-time paid care committee District Organisers, each responsible for a number of schools in their care committee district and acting as a bridge between schools and JACs and hence with the Juvenile Employment Bureaux. The organisers were directly responsible to the LCC Education Committee through its Children's Care (Central) sub-Committee.

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16 E.H.C. Wethered, 'Juvenile Labour Exchanges' The Child Vol.4, No.12, September 1914, 1019-1023.

17 See Chapter I i *supra* for the work of care committees.

Their qualities, according to the Chief Education Officer, Sir Robert Blair must include 'unfailing tact, a good address, commonsense, judgement of character, businesslike habits and a talent for organisation'. In addition she (for all twelve were women) must have 'a certain social standing in order that she may deal successfully with managers of schools'.[18]

The Charity Organisation Society was deeply involved in this work in London through its strength on care committees, and an article in the Charity Organisation Review on the London JACs gave a comprehensive list of their functions.[19] They were to co-ordinate the efforts of different organisations dealing with juvenile employment in the locality, achieve close liaison with teachers and care committees so as to obtain full knowledge of the children seeking employment, and maintain equally close contact with prospective employers. They were to take part through a rota in interviews with school leavers, promote and encourage attendance at evening classes and organise ways of keeping in touch with such boys and girls placed in work as should appear to need supervision. The size of the undertaking was shown by the fact that around 60,000 boys and girls left school at fourteen annually, and only just over 2,000 went on to full-time trade or domestic economy schools.[20]

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18 Report of an Inquiry into the working of the Scheme of co-operation between the London County Council Education Authority and the Labour Department of the Ministry of Labour. Hereafter referred to as The Blair Report. Section II 'The After-care organisation' 10 October 1917. Examples of the London organisation :

Care Committee District (in close touch with schools)	Organiser (responsible to LCC sub-committee)	Employment Exchange to which is attached a Juvenile Advisory Ctee (resp. to Central London JAC)
i. Marylebone, Paddington & Westminster	‹-› Miss Marriott ‹——›	Edgeware Rd. & Westminster (Marlborough St.)
ii. Bethnal Green, Bow, Bromley, Poplar	‹——› Miss Belk ‹——›	Shoreditch/Poplar

19 H. W. Jevons, 'Industrial Prospects for Boys and Girls' Charity Organisation Review April 1914, 190-209.

20 For Trade School places available to girls in the LCC see The London Teacher 21 November 1913, 965; for figures of girls in these schools see The Schoolmistress January 1914, 300. For the war years see Minutes of the LCC Education Committee 14 March 1917 where courses offered to girls and boys in London Trade Schools are given.

In 1917 Sir Robert Blair's remarkably full and frank Memorandum reviewed the working of this London organisation, making no secret of its weaknesses as well as of its achievements. He began by pointing out the advantage to London of the care committee involvement.

> In the first place the school care committee begins the work of guardianship at an earlier stage [than outside London] and where it is active and efficient is able to collect a considerable amount of information with respect to the children long before they are due to leave school. Consequently in many instances the parents make the acquaintance of the care committee for the first time at the school. Secondly, usually by means of the school conference it takes an active part in advising in regard to employment.[21]

The care committee structure relied on a sufficient supply of volunteers and the war had hit them hard. Blair knew that when there were shortages it was the after-care work that would suffer. The London Authority did not try to solve the problem by appointing special workers for after-care as this cut across the principle that one family should not be visited by several care committee members. It is clear from correspondence within the Education Officer's department that in some parts of London the system virtually broke down with the heaviest burden falling on the District Organisers.[22]

Blair described in detail the procedure for 'placing' school leavers. He admitted describing the system at its best which was only achieved in comparatively few areas. Though lengthy, his account deserves quotation since it is the minutiae that explain both the strength of the process in some areas and its failure in others.

> The Head Teacher furnishes a report ... from which the care committee can learn the standard of attainments, the general character, the special abilities, the medical record and the sort of employment recommended by the Head Teacher. The secretary of the committee arranges for the child's parents to be visited and by

21 The Blair Report Section II.

22 GLRO EO/WEL/1/2 Memorandum from Miss Morton to the Chief Education Officer on wartime strains in Care Committee Work 6 July 1915; and see also EO/GEN/6/17 Care Committee Report March 1916.

this means ascertains the family circumstances and the parents' wishes, the child's own inclinations and the name of any institution or person suitable for the purpose of keeping in touch with the child subsequently.

About a month before leaving school the child and one of its parents attend a conference of the school committee usually held in the Head Teacher's room. Not more than three members of the committee are present together with the Head Teacher, the secretary of the appropriate juvenile advisory committee, possibly the district organiser for children's care and the responsible teacher of the evening institute. Before each interview takes place the case is discussed ... When the parent is called in with the child a friendly talk takes place. A definite employment may be in prospect in which case its suitability is discussed. It may be necessary to dissuade the parent and to suggest other possible employment. Advice is also given as to the most suitable evening institute and the most suitable course of instruction. If no definite employment is in view the parent is advised to attend the employment exchange at a time when a rota meeting is to be held. The juvenile advisory committee secretary has made a careful note of the circumstances of the case and will be guided by what has taken place at the school conference. Immediately before leaving school, unless the child's parents have stated at the school conference that they have made satisfactory arrangements for employment, the child attends with its parents at a rota meeting, when definite vacancies are offered and the child is placed. Arrangements are then made with the school committee to visit and report on the child's welfare periodically, and the child is invited to call at the exchange if any further advice or assistance is required with regard to employment.

Blair was frank about the fact that in a good many districts this somewhat alarming *rite of passage* was working badly.

The Head Teacher fills up a form giving the minimum of information required. A school conference is held but without the Head Teacher and without any representative from the employment exchange. The parents and children are interviewed or sometimes the parents without the children, the care committee form being filled up in their presence by means of answers to questions. There is no opportunity for discussing the case except in the presence of the parent and the child. Only those who have no employment at all are referred to the employment exchange. If subsequently the child attends the exchange the only information available is contained in the meagre particulars on the school leaving form. The case is

> discussed almost *de novo* by a group of persons none of whom is in touch with the school committee.

After the child is placed in employment The school committee are notified of the placing of the child but neglect or are unable to send in any report on the child's subsequent progress'.[23] 'In all' Blair continued 'we have in various parts of London every degree of success and failure'. He identified the weak links in this elaborate chain as inadequate work by head teachers; the reluctance of teachers and school care committees to co-operate with the advisory committees, teachers in particular preferring to place children without any consultation; the shortage in many areas of 'a leisured class interested in social work'; and over-elaborate arrangements for co-operation with the parents. He went on to consider how simplifications could be made. Some of the friction arose from the divided authority between the Ministry of Labour in charge of employment exchanges and juvenile advisory committees[24] and the schools. The industrial conditions of London however made it essential to retain the existing juvenile employment agencies in close contact with the adult exchanges, so that it was not possible to bring all the after-care organisation together under the education authority. Teachers, including heads, showed their resentment of the dual authority by perfunctory form filling and even by reluctance 'to give up a practice which amounts to conducting a local registry office'.[25]

That the failure to use the system properly was not always on the side of the school may be seen from a series of bitter comments from the Headmistress of a school in Camberwell. In 1915 she recorded in the Log Book

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23 The Blair Report Section III 'Co-operation between the School Care Committee and the Juvenile Advisory Committee'.

24 Formerly under the Board of Trade and transferred in 1916 when the Minstry of Labour was set up.

25 The Blair Report Section IV 'Observations on the suitability of the Scheme'.

Fifth meeting of the school leaving committee. This continues to be as great a farce as before. At considerable inconvenience the time of the meeting was altered to make it possible for a representative of the JAC (Labour) to be present, but none appeared. No parents arrived and the proceedings consisted simply in the Headmistress, Miss Yorke and Miss Henderson interviewing the girls and eliciting from them again the information already supplied on the school leaving forms.

The same Head commented in 1918 that only one parent had attended the leavers' interview meeting though she had evidence, from the circumstances of a recent air-raid, that virtually all the children concerned did have one parent at home. A few months later she reported that only two parents turned up when twelve girls were to be interviewed. She also noted that no help or advice about trades had been received 'as there was still no representative from the Juvenile Labour Bureau present'.[26] That such breakdowns in the system took place is amply confirmed from Blair's account. Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, his long memorandum gives no indication as to whether more trouble was taken to ensure proper school conferences for boys.

The ability of boys and girls in wartime to find jobs without help or guidance was also mentioned by Blair, and re-emphasised in a memorandum for the Ministry of Labour in July 1918 prepared by R. A. Bray. In his dual capacity as a member of the LCC Education Committee and as Chairman of the London Central Juvenile Advisory Committee, Bray was a passionate advocate of intervention to secure proper employment. The memorandum pointed out that employment exchanges were often ignored by employers and by girls and boys. As even in normal times the demand for young workers slightly exceeded the supply, the system, if fully used, could ensure that the worst jobs went unfilled and that the employers knew why. The work was hindered by parents who placed children themselves, by teachers and voluntary

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26 All extracts from the 'Miscellaneous' section of the Log Book for Boundary Lane School Camberwell GLRO EO/DIV7/BOW/LB/2.

associations taking a hand, and worst of all, by children finding their own jobs and ignoring all advice.[27]

Placing girls and boys had its problems, but providing any effective supervision of those in work was even more difficult. An article in the Charity Organisation Review by an experienced care committee worker, Helen Jevons, commented critically on both functions from first-hand experience of work in two East End London boroughs. She pointed out that care committee voluntary workers were being asked to cope with problems of employment and industry, which did not appeal to them. She too had experienced school conferences at which the head teacher and juvenile advisory committee members were often not present, and unlike the writer of 1914[28] and Blair's reference to 'a friendly talk'[29] she described the school conference as too formal an occasion which 'prevents any free expression of opinion on the children's part'. However, while it was clear that individual teachers had far more influence on a school leaver than any other agency, she thought the conferences were valuable 'provided members of care committees who have no knowledge of industry do not attempt to suggest employments'. The conference at least drew the parents' attention to the child's future work as an important matter and one in which the authorities were interested. As for any supervision or after-care once a child had left school for work she admitted that prospects were bleak. Children in the area she knew did not, on the whole, want to join clubs or evening classes. The only place for meeting with them after working hours was the school, the one place they would shun.

> To sum up then at the present time, where the after-care scheme is being carried out it is mainly a scheme for reporting only, and the valuable time of voluntary workers who might be establishing friendly relations with a limited number of children is taken up by much routine paper work, while no help or suggestions in carrying out this work are offered by the Education Committee.

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27 GLRO EO/WEL/1/19 Memorandum prepared by the Chairman of the London (central) Juvenile Advisory Committee for the Employment Department of the Ministry of Labour July 1918.

28 E. H. C. Whethered, *op.cit. supra*, n.16.

29 See extract from The Blair Report *supra*, 215.

What was needed, she concluded, if after-care was to be of any use was much more money, a comfortable local office where the children could be met and a clerk to undertake the routine clerical work.[30]

There is no means of telling how many London school leavers passed through this sifting machinery. Its aims were impeccable : to encourage good employers and discourage the bad; to prevent the entry of fourteen year-olds into work with no future prospects apart from the likelihood of being thrown out once an adult wage was asked for; to guard against the excessive physical strain on young adolescents of many forms of employment where starting money might be good. The means taken to achieve these ends may well however have struck both parents and children as unjustified interference, especially as the London care committees, as previously mentioned, were strongly influenced by Charity Organisation Society members and thus by attitudes which during the war became increasingly unacceptable to many working people.[31] Indeed in an internal discussion in 1917 on whether the Society should change its name the point was made that 'The Society's name is undeservedly but none the less finally objectionable to many people including in a notable degree the industrial classes'.[32] Nor was this the only problem. George Rainey, honorary medical secretary of a London school care committee, noted, in 1916, that voluntary workers on these committees came and went frequently, were irregular in attendance and had an average standard of work 'that leaves not a little to be desired'. 'There is an idea in many quarters that anyone who is animated by good intentions and has a little spare time is fitted to be a friendly adviser to the working classes. Nothing could be further from the truth.' Rainey also pointed out a conflict likely to arise between the advice of the school and that of the labour exchange. He mentioned one London school from which fifty girls left in

30 H. W. Jevons, 'Care Committee Work. Some Criticisms : The LCC Scheme for After-care Work' Charity Organisation Review July-December 1917, 96-7.

31 B. A. Waites, 'The Effect of the First World War on Class and Status in England' Journal of Contemporary Studies II 1976, 27-48. Particular reference 41.

32 Quoted in M. Rooff, A Hundred Years of Family Welfare (London 1972). 119.

1913-1914 to go into box making, cigar work, upholstery, office work, leather work and book making and some other trades. Weekly wages averaged four to six shillings a week, but work did not end until 7pm in any of the jobs and sometimes later. He remarked that while care committees representing one department of the state urged children to continue their education at evening institutes, labour exchanges representing another department placed them (through no fault of its own) in situations where this advice was impossible to follow.[33]

How far parents were worried by the intervention of the medical services in the overseeing of school leavers is another area of surmise. The 1915 Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education mentioned that the school doctor entered on the child's record card a final opinion relative to suitability for employment, to be transferred by the head teacher to the school leaving form for the guidance of the juvenile advisory committee. 'Not only should it state defects as, for example "heart disease", "very bad sight", but the child's physique should be summed up in such terms as "robust", "delicate", "tendency to chest trouble", "rheumatic" etc.'[34] Anna Martin whose trenchant articles in defence of working-class mothers have been quoted in other contexts and were based on her intimate knowledge of Bermondsey in particular, attacked these varied forms of intervention, including the medical, in the course of an article published just after the war

> The inability of the State to act successfully as parent arises no less from its irresponsibility than from its lack of knowledge. To take an example : Juvenile Labour Exchanges have not been marked successes; nevertheless, or perhaps more strictly speaking, therefore, it is sometimes influentially suggested that employers in future should be compelled to obtain their young workers only through such agencies, working in conjunction with certain committees. This would go far towards making the clerks, the head teachers, the doctors, the members of the advisory committees, the arbiters of

33 G. Rainey, 'The Care Committee and its Future' School Hygiene February 1916. His care committee work was with Hamond Square School Shoreditch (Division 4).

34 Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for 1915 [Cd.8338] 1916, 117.

each child's industrial career. A more appalling prospect can hardly be imagined. The teachers are able and devoted, but they wield an authority in daily life comparable to that of a captain on his quarter-deck, and not seldom grow dogmatic and opinionated; nor is the individual knowledge of the hundreds of children under their care anything like as great as they are apt to claim. At best they only know their pupils under the restraints of school discipline, and not as the young folks show themselves when free to follow their own impulses. Tommy may, under the influence of his headmaster, declare he wants to be apprenticed to a skilled trade. His parents are aware he would tire of it in three months. Fred may seem a born office boy but his mother knows that he pilfers her pence and that stamps would prove an irrresistable temptation. John may not seem robust enough for outdoor work but his heart is set on it and his uncle has promised to get him a light job. The doctor is no more infallible than the teacher. The writer knows at the moment of four girls, all earning a comfortable living, the respective parents of whom were told their daughters must never be put to work at all. The ever-changing theories and methods of medicine are, in themselves, a sufficient proof that its dicta cannot claim finality. Nevertheless should the course of action recommended by the outside authority turn out disastrously there is no way of bringing that authority to book or even of insisting upon its recognising its own blunders, all the pains and penalties of which fall on someone else.[35]

ii. Trades and occupations open to London girls

Leaving aside for separate consideration the question of domestic service for younger girls, what trades were open to them in London on leaving school? Levels of wages, hours of work and other important details for a large number of London trades were set out in a publication of the Apprenticeship and Skilled Trades Association.[36] A few examples may best illustrate the questions involved in deciding for or against entry into

35 A. Martin, 'The Irresponsbility of the Father' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.85, January-June 1919, 958-959.

36 Trades for London Girls and how to enter Them compiled by the Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association. First published 1910; re-issued with additions 1914. See Appendix 2.

certain trades, and how easily some well-meaning but ill-informed care committee worker such as Helen Jevons appears to have encountered might fail to understand a parent's objection to or choice of a child's employment.[37]

The book, notwithstanding its origins, covered a wide range of occupations, some involving very little skill, and mentioned levels of training from the informal 'picking-up' of a craft through various forms of supervision to the very small number of formal apprenticeships. Girls in most trades came in as learners at average wages of two to three shillings a week, rising during training to six or seven, for periods ranging from a few months to several years. In some trades the learners had no formal wage but worked with an older woman who gave pocket money at her discretion. In some sections of the clothing trade girls could come in as 'trotters' or 'matchers' earning slightly more, but with less chance of learning the trade and of eventually rising to the levels of 'improver', 'assistant' and ultimately skilled 'hand' earning on average from eighteen to twenty-five shillings a week. Piece work was very common and slack seasons in some trades could seriously lower the average level of wages, though in certain trades - confectionery was one such - different branches of work might be switched to so as to offset this. Three different types of work can be looked at in more detail.

In Gentleman's Tailoring young girls had been employed for many years. Tailors found them indispensable and often employed their own daughters. There was no apprenticeship, girls coming in direct from school and earning about five shillings a week at a job that involved to begin with much heavy carrying and waiting about while garments were cut and fitted. A quick and useful worker in busy times might do much better, earning sometimes over two shillings a day, and the trade attracted girls because of the money that could be earned while still young. 'Much

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37 J. White, Rothschild Buildings, Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920 (London 1980) gives accounts of girls' work as tailoresses (210-216), cap makers and milliners (222-228), and cigarette makers (228-235).

kindness' was said to be shown to young workers in some workshops, especially in cases of illness, though there were also the 'unpleasant conditions inseparable from mixed workshops'. The work was described as monotonous and the tobacco-laden atmosphere unhealthy, combined with damp heat and meals often having to be eaten while working. Hours were from 8am to 8pm, ending at 4pm on a Saturday.

By contrast, waistcoat making, bespoke and readymade, was one of the skilled trades with a regular apprenticeship for three to four years, and with pay rising from two and sixpence to ten shillings by the fourth year. A trained worker was paid piece rates by the tailor, and then in turn paid her assistants. According to style and quality, a waistcoat earned her from four shillings to seven and sixpence. Apart from the cutters, this was an all-women's trade. A large number of girls went into machining and then might be employed on this practically anywhere in the needle trades. It was much sub-divided and specialized for different garments.

Box-making was an example of a trade where cutting work done by men was giving way to machines looked after by girls. Making up the boxes was done by hand-glueing or by machine, though girls would probably only learn one or other process, and work by machine was increasing. It was monotonous, with little scope for intelligence but needing great care to avoid accidents to the hands. A young girl would work for three months with a trained 'hand' for pocket money, then as a learner from three to twelve months for two shillings, rising to four, per week. Even a competent, fully trained worker would be unlikely to earn more than fifteen shillings a week. Certain trades (such as fur pulling) were advised against on health grounds and others because they tended to attract 'a rough class of worker'. Examples given of these were French polishing and, curiously, umbrella and sunshade making.

The effects of the war on women's employment has been the subject in whole or in part of a number of recent studies[38] and lies outside the scope of this chapter except in so far as these changes affected the young girl school leaver in her first year or two. Young girls did not normally go into munitions until they were sixteen. The limitation of night work in munitions to women over eighteen excluded the younger girls to some extent, according to the women factory inspectors,[39] though serious cases of illegal employment and gross exploitation were common.[40] But a large number of fourteen year-olds who might otherwise have stayed at home for a time to help out, or have taken part-time daily work nursemaiding or in domestic service, went into factories in place of older boys and girls.[41] The Consultative Committee of 1909 had already noted the increasing tendency to employ young girls in some branches of factory work and war conditions greatly intensified this. 'Disapprove of it as we may,' wrote a welfare worker concerned with young girls in 1917, 'the fact remains that the child of fourteen has become a necessity in many of our factories and has to be reckoned with'.[42]

As indicated in the previous section, large numbers of school leavers escaped supervision either over job choice or when in work. The same writer commented on the tendency to change jobs rapidly. 'It is not uncommon to find girls of fifteen who have worked at several different places in the year since leaving school.'[43] In London the Post Office took on girl telegraph messengers but without arranging education classes for

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38 S. Lewenhak, Women and Trade Unions (London 1977) 144-162.
A. Marwick, Women at War 1914-1918 (London 1977) *passim*.
G. Braybon, Women Workers in the First World War (London 1981) *passim*.
J. Bush, Behind the Lines (London 1984) 108-112.

39 Miss A. M. Anderson, Principal Lady Inspector of Factories 'Extent and Effect of Substitution of Women and Girls in Industry' in Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories for 1917 [Cd.9108] 1918, 16.

40 *Ibid.*, 16.

41 *Ibid.*, 11, and see C. V. Butler, Domestic Service, an Inquiry by the Women's Industrial Council (London 1916) 74.

42 Miss M. L. Wilkins, 'Welfare Work with Young Employees' Child Study Vol.10, No.2, April 1917, 44.

43 Wilkins, *ibid.*, 44.

them as was normal for Post Office boys, so that they faced dismissal at sixteen with no training of any kind. As a woman commentator on this situation remarked in 1916

> With both girls and boys the whole criterion which is applied to a situation is one of wages. If wages are anything above eight shillings the situation is a good one; if under, a bad one. No consideration of the future weighs with the children and good vacancies have remained unfilled because no-one would take a learner's wage.[44]

Given the current level of learners' wages in many London trades in 1914, this attitude on the part of fourteen to fifteen year-olds is perhaps not surprising. Miss Squires of the Principal Lady Factory Inspector's staff wrote in 1914 that in London

> at a large East End restaurant where the midday meal is served to a hundred workers at a neighbouring factory the Superintendant and her helpers had for years deplored the insufficiency of the dinner purchased by the young girls under sixteen. Meat and vegetables were purchased by the older girls and women, but a little pudding and gravy or tea and bread and butter was all the younger girls could afford ... One day soon after war broke out there was such a run on meat and vegetable dinners that the supply was not equal that day to the demand - all the younger girls were asking to be served with them. The cause was that the wages had that day been raised voluntarily by the occupier to the proposed Trade Board rate and the effect was immediate and has continued. This fact is a striking answer to those who cling to the theory that an increase in wages is of no substantial value to a girl.[45]

Factory work, notably in the dress and luxury trades, suffered heavily in the first few months of the war causing widespread and acute distress, reflected for example in the schools by a surge of requests for free meals in the later months of 1914. By the spring of 1915 some factories and workshops in London had adapted to wartime needs, with firms searching

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44 E. M. Salmond, 'Our Children - Wage Earners or Future Citizens?' II The Common Cause of Humanity 1 December 1916, 437.

45 Special Report from Miss Squires in 'Miss Anderson's report on "Women and Girls in Industry"' Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1914 [Cd.8051] 33.

rapidly for alternative contracts. Thus Miss Squires mentioned as examples theatrical costumiers and furriers in London going over as fast as possible to different sections of war uniforms production.[46] Alarmed at the risk of 'deterioration' among young girls and boys who found themselves unemployed, voluntary workers in some areas took action. In Bermondsey parents were being urged to let their fourteen year-olds stay on at school, the London Juvenile Advisory Committee decided to take no action to prevent boys of fourteen working at Woolwich Arsenal, even though they would emerge eventually untrained, and as for the girls

> Girls' work is still slack, the better-class girl having suffered more than the rougher type, who has found abundance of factory work and government contract work open to her. The risk of deterioration in a girl who has been accustomed to steady work and who is suddenly left for weeks at home unoccupied is very serious and every effort has been made to persuade such girls to join clubs and classes ... The war indeed has proved the value of our juvenile Labour Exchanges to which girls and boys have flocked in unprecedented numbers seeking both work and advice.[47]

In Lewisham a more elaborate scheme was set up to occupy usefully girls of sixteen and under who were out of work in the early months of the war. The local Juvenile Advisory Committee and some care committee members concerned with after-care organised the scheme with help from the Prince of Wales National Relief Fund. Premises were found and classes organised. Mornings were devoted to needlework, with materials supplied from the Queen's Work for Women Fund, and the afternoons to clerical instruction, first aid, and it was hoped, if a teacher could be found, domestic subjects. Apart from the educational value, the purpose of this was to 'prevent many girls from getting slack and idle at a time when usual openings in the labour market were closed to them'.[48]

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46 Anderson, *op.cit.*, 33.

47 E. M. Salmond, Article in 18th Report of the Aims and Work of the United Girls' Schools Mission for the year 1914.

48 Lewisham Borough News 29 January 1915.

The Reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories during the war years included a number of special contributions already referred to from Miss Anderson the Principal Lady Inspector. They referred very largely to women and older girls but a number of comments were relevant to the younger workers. Thus, overtime was supposed to be limited to those over sixteen but the 1917 report spoke of constant pressure to prevent it being worked by thirteen to fourteen year-olds.[49] Earlier, in 1914, night work for young girls was vigorously attacked. 'Very young girls show almost immediately in my experience symptoms of lassitude, exhaustion and impaired vitality under the influence of employment at night.'[50] Miss Anderson noted that as women left for munitions, younger girls had tended to replace them at fairly heavy work, for example in brick yards, fruit preserving, laundries, textile factories, and paper works.[51] Some young girls certainly did work in munitions. In 1916 the Health of Workers in Munitions Committee issued an interim report on women in munition factories. It covered 1,326 women and girls in eleven factories in England and Scotland. In one of these a breakdown by age revealed twenty-five fourteen year-olds and fifteen girls a year older, working a seventy-seven hour week. The two women doctors who signed the report noted that in a number of the factories no sitting was allowed and that sometimes continuous shifts of seven hours at a stretch were worked by cutting down on meal times.[52]

A large number of industries essential for the war were less well covered by wartime legislation than armaments and transport but were under great pressure and sub-contracting in particular could lead to serious exploitation.

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49 Miss Anderson, 'Effect of the third Year of War on the Industrial Employment of Women and Girls' in Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1916 [Cd.8570] 1917, 7.

50 Report from Miss Constance Smith in Anderson, *op.cit.*, [Cd.8051] 44.

51 Anderson, *ibid.*, [Cd.8570] 16.

52 'Inquiry into the Health of Women engaged in Munition Factories', being Part II of the Interim Report of the Health of Munition Workers Committee [Cd.8511] October 1916, 110. The Report was signed by Dr Janet Campbell and Dr Lilian Wilson.

> The demarcation line between "munitions" and other army supplies was constantly shifting during the war, as the government found it necessary to bring more and more industries under its control, but the great majority of East London clothing and food firms were permanently excluded from the more stringent regulations of the Munitions Act.[53]

Pre-war discussion of adolescent workers had never tired of insisting that it was not only immoral but also foolishly short-sighted to treat them as mere factory fodder or convenient blind-alley labour. In 1917 the Final Report of the Lewis Committee gave authoritative backing to this view. Even before the war 'at the mature age of fourteen they have become free competitors in the labour market and they use their freedom to the full'. Most were likely to be dismissed when they demanded an adult wage, and then 'Upon this educational and industrial chaos has come the war to aggravate conditions that could hardly be made graver' while at the end of the war there could only be a prospect of painful adjustment to 'lower wages and normal prospects'.[54]

Other commentators turned to more modest, practical proposals - in particular, for girls, the need for a good welfare worker. The experienced welfare worker quoted earlier stressed this point and, while by no means removing responsibility from the employer for moral welfare, recognised its limitations. Employers should see that

> these young workers are not herded together with older women of doubtful character; that workshops are made clean for them in the sense that they are not always hearing bad language or low conversations ... The fact that many of them unfortunately hear this kind of thing at home never excuses an employer from knowingly placing these children under the care of a man or woman who will injure them morally or by petty persecution, bullying etc. make their lives a misery. It is also entirely useless to say that the foreman or forewoman or supervisor is entirely responsible for the behaviour or well-being of the child; his or her duty is to see that the child learns her work and gets through a certain amount of it, but it is here that

53 Bush. *op.cit.*, 110.

54 Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War [Cd.8512] 1917, 4-5.

> the work of a good welfare secretary should prove invaluable' ... [Such a person] is able to advise the employer as to what is best for those under her care and so to encourage and help the child herself in many ways without trespassing on the work of the foreman or forewoman responsible for the daily work and output.

She concluded with the assertion that 'the success or failure of their future as workers depended almost entirely on the way in which they were treated in the first years of factory life'. Leaving aside Rowntrees and similar firms 'too well known' to need comment, she drew attention to what certain other good employers were doing. Thus Messrs. Broadwood the piano makers, largely employed on aeroplane work in wartime, kept young girls in the workroom under continuous supervision of a manageress who trained them in work and behaviour for a few months before passing them over to other parts of the factory, while Reeves and Sons started off fourteen year-old girls in a factory school under a skilled forewoman.[55] The fate of this scheme, reported in 1916, was an example of the pressure on young girls to earn rather than train. Reeves and Sons agreed with the LCC that teachers would be provided to give six hours a week tuition on general subjects including Physical Education. The scheme had to be given up because of parents' opposition, as girls were paid in lesson time but could not earn bonus money. Pressure of work, and the need to keep as many young girl employees as possible, forced the firms to end their general education scheme.[56]

In November 1917 The London Teacher carried an enthusiastic report on a scheme for the training of young girl workers, agreed to and adopted by a number of West End dressmaking and retail firms.

> The importance of a boy learning a trade or being trained for a profession is now fully recognised and public opinion has been roused to the dangers of the "blind alley" occupation. We welcome the growth of a similar public opinion with regard to girls ... one

55 Wilkins, *op.cit.*, 45-47.

56 T. M. Pugh, 'Working Girls and Trade Schools (London)' in J. J. Findlay (ed.), The Young Wage Earner (London 1918) 144-154.

great London industry at least is now recruiting its juvenile labour with a view to training women citizens and workers as well as obtaining efficient "hands". The dressmaking, ladies' tailoring, millinery and allied trades absorb a large number of girls from London schools. The best employers in industry have now formed a scheme which guarantees to the girl worker (1) a good opportunity for learning a trade, (2) a fixed working week, (3) a minimum wage, (4) "time off" during working hours to attend a trade training school, and (5) safeguards as to the vexed question of messenger work, etc. From the teacher's standpoint the provision of free time to attend school for three hours a day on two days a week is of the greatest importance and we are certain our colleagues are willing to do a great deal to help the scheme ... When girls are about to leave school the advantage of occupations which involve learning a trade should be pointed out ... Most important of all teachers should disregard all requests for girls as learners from firms outside the scheme, or, in any case from firms which offer conditions less favourable than under the scheme, including of course the opportunity of attending a trade training school. The scheme is not perfect; it could be criticised from many points of view; but it represents the most important voluntary effort which has yet been made in London to improve the conditions of girl labour and girl education.[57]

That there might be some difficulties not immediately apparent in the operation of this scheme is implied in the course of comments from the Principal Lady Inspector's staff where the need for welfare workers for young girls was once again stressed.

> There is great need for efficient welfare workers in these large West End houses. The present system consists of each section being in charge of the fitter who is an autocrat in her own department and brooks no interference. The state of the rooms varies therefore according to the temperament of the fitter - being clean if she has theories on the subject of cleanliness, but not otherwise; warm if she likes heat and so on. She engages her own workers so that it is difficult for the firm to ascertain whether, for example, certificates of fitness are being obtained, or if the young persons are attending school regularly.

Both over these points and in relation to welfare amenities generally, there was, the Inspector noted, 'immediate improvement' when an experienced

57 'Trades for Girls', unsigned article in The London Teacher 30 November 1917, 588.

welfare worker was installed. In the same report attention was drawn to some educational initiatives by employers either arising directly out of a concern with welfare or 'trying to be forerunners of the 1918 Act'. She noticed original and promising experiments even when schemes were frankly concerned with producing 'good and efficient factory workers' rather than giving any general education.[58] From the employees point of view however there could be strong criticism of welfare supervisors. I. O. Andrews in her study of the economic effects of the war on women and children quoted critics from Labour and radical women that supervisors wished for women workers who were 'docile, obedient and machine-like'. Those appointed were sometimes 'untrained relatives of members of the firm' capable of interfering unduly with the personal affairs of employees. Nevertheless even these critics admitted some good results in terms of mess rooms, kitchens, ambulance rooms and the like.[59]

Compulsory Day Continuation schooling, particularly as it affected girls, during the preparations and brief experiment of 1920-1922 will be considered in the last section of this chapter. Domestic Service, although not a primary option for school leavers in London, did involve sufficient fourteen to sixteen year-olds to justify its inclusion in this study, quite apart from the importance attached to it by moralists and eugenists as an essential staging post for the future wife and mother, and by employers of domestic labour determined to reverse the contemporary trend against it.

Figures for the country as a whole quoted in a Report published in 1916 showed a steady drop in the number of female domestic servants in the younger age groups

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58 Report from Miss Stevenson in Miss A. M. Anderson, 'Welfare in Factories and Workshops' : Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for 1918 [Cmd.340] 1919, 35.

59 I. Osgood Andrews, Economic Effects of the World War upon Women and Children in Great Britain (New York and Oxford) 1921, 138-139.

Table as in text.

Ages	1881	1901	1911	Increase or decrease % 1901-1911
10-14	98,190	20,034	7,466	-62.7
14		44,768	37,049	-17.2
15-20	430,177	398,630	390,330	- 2.1

The Report comments

> The very large reduction in the proportion of the youngest age group is undoubtedly due mainly to the general raising of the age at which children leave school. But the limitation of juvenile employment from this cause does not appear to have affected to any appreciable extent the total number occupied at the age of 14-15, and the decline of 17.2% shown in the table must be attributed to a preference at this age for other forms of occupation rather than to a prolongation of school life.[60]

For London a special report in the 1921 Census confirmed that 'Girls on leaving school go mainly into factories, workshops, warehouses and shops. The proportion engaged in domestic service is only about half what it becomes in middle and later life'.[61]

There can have been few areas of employment where the gulf between the perception of the work by employers and employees was so wide. A writer on women's employment in 1911 described domestic service as offering 'good food and moral care' in a home 'of greater refinement than their (the servants') own', 'all the dignity of a woman's true sphere', adding 'and if as a "general" she has learned all sides of housekeeping and can cook and clean and sew and mother babies all at once, she is a priceless possession for a working man'.[62] Ironically among some of the commonest complaints from servants were those of inferior and insufficient food,

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60 C. V. Butler, Domestic Service : An Inquiry by the Women's Industrial Council Appendix VI, Table 6, 130. (London 1916. Reprinted New York and London 1980).

61 Census of 1921 for the Administrative County of London Report on Occupations of Females, 35.

62 M. Mostyn Bird, Women at Work : A Study of the different ways of earning a living open to women. (London 1911) Chapter 4, 'Service'.

wretched bedrooms and dark, inconvenient kitchens, undignified marks of subservience and opportunities for social life so restricted that marriage prospects were seriously hindered. Margaret Bondfield summing up for the Labour Party in 1918, described domestic service as 'an unregulated, sweated industry conducted by ill-trained, unorganised employers and workpeople'.[63] A number of recent studies, autobiographies and published case histories make it unnecessary here to itemise the humiliations and overwork that frequently accompanied domestic service as experienced by the younger entrants,[64] but it is relevant to consider some further reasons for the decline of domestic service as an option for the urban school leaver, as well as some contemporary proposals for combatting this.

One reason seldom mentioned for the unpopularity of this work was put forcibly in 1915 to the journalist and writer Harold Begbie, who had been commissioned to report on the working of the Queen's Work for Women scheme, set up in 1914 to tackle the serious distress in the London dressmaking and allied trades early in the war. Begbie in the course of this inquiry encountered Miss M. E. Bibby, Sanitary Inspector in the Public Health Department of the Metropolitan Borough of St Pancras, on the general committee of the St Pancras School for Mothers since 1907, and a woman with close and extensive knowledge of the life of working-class girls. Asked why in a time of distress domestic servants were so hard to come by, she replied

> There's scarcely a poor girl in London who does not hate housework and the reason for this intense hatred is not far to seek. From the very first moment when they could do anything they have been servants - little drudging toiling maids-of-all-work to their own mothers. People forget that. From the very beginning of childhood

63 M. Bondfield, 'Women as Domestic Workers' in M. Phillips (ed.), Women and the Labour Party (London 1918) 67.

64 For example :P. Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant (Dublin and New York 1975)
T. M. McBride, The Domestic Revolution (London 1976)
J. Burnett (ed.), Useful Toil (London 1976)
M. Powell, Below Stairs (London 1968).

they have washed and scrubbed, dusted and polished, nursed babies and bathed babies and rocked babies to sleep, have cooked food, washed clothes, mended holes, made beds, run errands ... This has been their childhood and their youth ...

One forgets I think how very great a part of the housework of London is done by children. Indeed a good many people seem to think that the poor have no housework of their own and that if they are not working for other people they must be sitting or standing about doing nothing at all. Of course this is very absurd. The housework of the poor is very hard and is almost continuous. They have scarcely any of the conveniences and contrivances which make housework in the richer classes comparatively light. Indeed it is wonderful to see how they manage. But I am perfectly certain that the management is effected at the cost of an immense disgust for domestic service among the children. They grow up with the one idea of escaping from it. As a matter of fact they are never entirely free from housework but the factory and the shop at least provide them with several hours of deliverance from work for which they have conceived a quite ineradicable dislike.[65]

The Women's Industrial Council Report mentioned above provided further evidence on school leavers and domestic service. The Council had circulated questionnaires to employers and employees, answered by 708 and 566 respectively.[66] In addition they had received a large number of letters and other submissions on the basis of which C.V. Butler compiled her Report. Based on 1911 material, it was not for various reasons, published until 1916 when the wartime exodus from domestic service was at its height. The Report took a position basically favourable to domestic service and the need to encourage girls to return to it, while at the same time quoting freely from employees and setting out the genuine grievances which should be taken seriously by employers. On the entry of the school leaver into service it commented

> The town girl who goes into service has been brought up in one of two very clearly marked social classes : (1) the labouring class for whom the alternative to service is rough factory work, beginning at

65 H. Begbie, The Queen's Net (London 1915) 170.

66 See E. Mappen, n.11, *supra*. The Women's Industrial Council grew out of the Women's Trade Union Association and established itself in 1894 as an organisation to investigate and watch over the interests of working women and press for legislative changes.

a weekly wage of from three to six shillings, normally five shillings, as compared with the two to three shillings and keep in a first place; and (2) the artisan class, which sends girls to shops and offices, to workrooms and the best sort of factory work where the initial earnings are generally lower than in service. A certain proportion of these town girls go out to service at once ... but there is a clearly marked tendency on the part of parents to put off their daughters' start in life until they are fifteen at least, though the influence of the National Insurance Act has been pulling against this among small employers ... A girl who does not go straight out as a little "general" either stays at home for a year and "helps mother" - and in the case of an eldest daughter leaving school such help may mean the only remission of toil which the mother has had in fourteen years - or she may take out a baby, or get a place as a morning girl in a three to four servant household where the shortage of servants has made it possible for the cook and housemaid to insist on half-day help with their work.[67]

Shortage of servants had meant that almost any girls, even the mentally deficient, could get some kind of a place, and this, the Report pointed out lowered the status of the occupation. 'Unfortunately it is the lower type of servant, the ill-trained or defective girl pictured as perpetually cleaning doorsteps with smuts on her face that in industrial towns comes chiefly before the eyes of most artisan fathers and their Standard VII daughters. These are apt to turn aside in contempt from such an occupation and seek employers with a higher standard of efficiency and less demand for "menial work".[68]

Raising standards to encourage entrants was seen in the Report as being above all a matter of training. This might be done in several ways - by mistresses willing to undertake it, by the provision of more domestic instruction in school, or through some form of after-school training. Both Juvenile Advisory and Juvenile Employment Committees should be enlisted to encourage girls to take up service, as well as the Girls' Friendly Society and the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, both of

67 Butler, *op.cit.*, 74.
68 *Ibid.*, 71.

which ran lists of mistresses willing to train 'on the job'. The Report however voiced doubts about some girls starting in this way. The bright healthy girl might manage, but

> The stunted child of four feet ten inches and under, whom not all the efforts of parents, medical inspectors and care committees have developed; the delicate girl from the comfortable artisan home - these are not in the least fitted for domestic service at fourteen. If they do find situations they are apt to become hopeless little drudges, in constant hot water with either the mistress or the older servants.[69]

A similar view had been expressed a few years earlier by the Secretary of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants (MABYS) giving evidence to the Poor Law Commission. Asked about London elementary schoolgirls as domestic servants and whether the leaving age should be raised to fifteen, she replied

> I should be very glad if that could be. They are such little things when they come to our offices; a poor little shrimp of an under-fed, under-sized, under-slept child, what can we do for her? We cannot get her a place. She goes somewhere else for a year and she never returns to us at all.[70]

The MABYS was primarily, though not exclusively, concerned with children going into service from the Poor Law schools which, in their view, trained the future servant far better than did the ordinary elementary school, inculcating willingness, the habit of obedience and respect for superiors.[71]

As for domestic studies in the elementary school, the Report realised that the schools 'emphatically do not unaided prepare girls either to manage a house satisfactorily or to meet readily all the varied demands of

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69 Butler, *op.cit.*, 76.

70 Royal Commission on the Poor Law Appendix Vol.3 [Cd.4755] Evidence of Miss Maria Poole, 4 December 1906, 408-417, Q.34069.

71 *Ibid.*, Qs.34065-67. In answer to Q.33876 Miss Poole agreed that the popular name for the MABYS was 'Mind and behave yourselves'. The MABYS was founded in 1875 to befriend young girls in or entering service, who were respectable but without home protection. By 1914 it had 13 London branches, ran registries and had a large staff of volunteer 'lady visitors'. Renamed 'The Association for the Care of Young Girls' in 1919.

domestic service'[72] and that there must be more training. This might well be a contentious proposal.

> On the one hand employers may say cheerily that half or the whole of the school time of all "working-class" girls over ten should be spent in domestic work, and some practical-minded parents would welcome this; on the other, enthusiasts for literary education cry out against calling down too soon "shades of the prison house" and entreat that the curriculum should not be made too utilitarian.[73]

Ideally, training should be after school in continuation classes or full-time in a trade school, though these, especially the latter, were never likely to be more than a minority provision.[74] It was also realised that too much training could produce a young servant too efficient to undertake willingly such tasks as potato peeling and washing-up. Employers might prefer the 'willing and teachable' to the 'well-trained and opinionative'.

By the time this Report appeared in 1916, the choice of domestic service for town girls leaving school was at even more of a discount. The frequency of job changes in search of good money has already been referred to as has the increased choice of work as older girls entered munitions and other war-related industries.[75] The erosion of deferential attitudes sometimes took surprising forms. Even in so respectable and conventional a journal as The Schoolmistress a song appeared in November 1916 with solo verses and chorus to be sung by a group of girl pupils. Under the title 'The Triumph of Mary Jane' the chorus ran

> Oh munitions! you've altered the conditions
> Of serving maids this happy country through.
> We can throw down in a trice
> If the missus isn't nice
> And that is what we certainly will do.[76]

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72 Butler, *op.cit.*, Appendix I, 109.

73 *Ibid.*, 77-79.

74 The three LCC Technical Institutes, Norwood, Paddington and Shoreditch, that ran full-time day domestic economy courses had an intake in the war years that varied between 100 (1913-1914) to 117 (1914-1915) dropping sharply to 97 and 72 in 1916-1917.

75 See *supra.*, 225.

76 The Schoolmistress 16 November 1916, 105.

A post-war report on domestic service appeared in 1919 this time from the Women's Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Reconstruction.[77] The conclusion was unanimous that girls should not enter service on leaving school but that two years of training from fourteen to sixteen should be provided, part of this period being given to general education. In the light of the Education Act this seemed a practicable proposal. The fourteen year-old was considered to be too immature intellectually, too young to adapt herself to living in someone else's house, and physically not up to the strain of the work she would be called on to do. There was moreover no doubt as to its unpopularity.

> The evidence of witnesses who appeared before the Committee tended to show that though the reduction in numbers might partly be due to circumstances connected with the war, there was among girls a growing distaste for domestic service under its present conditions and a reluctance on the part of parents to allow them to take up such work.[78]

The Report was practical and sympathetic to the needs of domestic workers, avoiding high-flown sentiments, and once again concentrating above all on the need for training to raise the status and prospects of the work. Its refusal however to tackle matters of hours and wages led one member, Dr Marion Phillips, to withhold her signature

> I believe the reason why it is difficult to get servants today is not lack of training but because servants are dissatisfied with wages and hours of work. They are also dissatisfied with many matters which may roughly be classed as questions of social status, but hours and wages are fundamental ... What I think should be aimed at is a general statement as to the minimum wage, the value of lodging and board, and the number of hours beyond which the worker should be entitled to overtime pay.[79]

This trade unionist's approach to private domestic work reflects the attempts made before, during and after the war to organise unions in so

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77 Ministry of Reconstruction : Report of theWomen's Advisory Committee on the Domestic Service problem [Cmd.67] 1919.

78 Report *op.cit.*, 8, para.4.

79 *Ibid.*, Memorandum by Dr Marion Phillips, 6.

scattered and hierarchical an industry. They lie outside the scope of this study as it is not probable that they would have touched the entrant straight from school.[80]

High post-war unemployment and the exclusion of domestics in private employment from unemployment benefit were among the reasons keeping up the numbers in service in the 1920s,[81] though the tendency was for entry to be in later adolescence at least in urban areas where school leavers could find alternative work. The training proposals were stillborn, particularly with the collapse of compulsory day continuation schools in almost every area by 1922.

iii The London Day Continuation Experiment

Apart from the raising of the school leaving age to fourteen without exceptions, the introduction of compulsory day continuation classes was possibly the most widely discussed of the measures introduced by the Education Bill in 1917.[82] Intermittent debate during the war on continuation classes had from time to time, largely from labour and feminist sources, dealt with the prospects within them for girls. Shortly before the war the Women's Co-operative Guild declared

> We do not want these classes simply to teach a trade and to turn out better workers; we want them to give general as well as trade instruction. Especially necessary is it to get the right kind of education for the girls and to guard against the tendency to give them training in domestic subjects. As one Guild member says "We do not want a girl to be taught to be a domestic servant but a home maker. Domestic training will not make a home. A girl trained to use her thinking powers by being educated on many sides will be able to take a broad outlook and an intelligent interest in all things appertaining to home life. She will be a better wife and mother and

80 S. Lewenhak, Women and Trade Unions (London 1977) 181-182, 207.

81 *Ibid.*, 182-183.

82 F. B. Low, 'The Girl and the Continuation School' Journal of Education October 1917, 154.

> a better citizen. If it should happen that she never be a wife and mother she will perhaps have even greater need of a general education.[83]

In July 1916 the Warden of Toynbee Hall, J. St G. Heath, took the argument to the heart of the domestic subjects' 'Establishment', pleading at an ATDS conference that when compulsory day continuation schools were achieved 'you do not insist that the unfortunate girls should only study domestic economy. The idea of technical education as an end in itself is fraught with dangers ... It is of extraordinary importance that people should get a wider outlook and that women should not be "cabined, cribbed and confined".[84] In the same month a conference of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union held in London passed a resolution calling for instruction for fourteen to eighteen year-olds moved in an impassioned speech by Susan Lawrence, Labour LCC member and connected for some years with London education. Moving an amendment to strengthen this resolution, Sylvia Pankhurst referred to the employment of girls of fourteen and fifteen in East End clothing factories, who were then pushed out at seventeen to make way for the next batch of juveniles. The resolution called for instruction between fourteen and eighteen that should be 'Compulsory, in daytime and during hours for which the employer pays'.[85]

Compulsion was fundamental if good employers were not to be undercut by the bad. In January 1917 a report by the London Chief Education Officer to the General Purposes sub-Committee in relation to day continuation proposals wrote, on the attitude of employers

> Some firms are prepared to co-operate with local education authorities to the extent of giving "time off"; some regard such a system as inconvenient; some as difficult; while others look upon it

83 Unsigned Editorial 'Women's Corner' Co-operative News 4 April 1914, 442.

84 Reported in Education Vol.27, 14 July 1916, 24.

85 Report of the 2nd (Biennial) Conference of the British Dominions Woman Suffrage Union 5-7 July 1916. Sylvia Pankhurst was a member of the English Advisory Committee together with Mrs Fawcett, Mrs Pethick-Lawrence, and Mrs Despard. Susan Lawrence : 1871-1947, member of the London School Board 1900. Co-opted and then elected to the LCC. Education Committee member. Returned as a Labour member 1913.

as impossible owing to the dislocation of office or factory or shop organisation. Most however think that if continuation schools in the daytime are necessary they should be compulsory; that only by compulsion can the better-class employers be protected. Many would favour such a system if compulsory.[86]

The Education Bill was introduced in August 1917. During its second reading and committee stages opposition to the further education clauses was building up and by the summer of 1918 Fisher introduced important modifications including the postponement of classes for the sixteen to eighteen year-olds for seven years after the local authority concerned had fixed its 'appointed day' for the schools to open, and as well a permitted reduction in the hours of attendance from 320 to 280. While some sections of Labour opinion were opposed altogether to part-time classes as a deliberate diversion from the aim of secondary education for all, Mary MacArthur writing in a Labour Women's symposium deplored these concessions to the 'clamour of those interested in securing an abundant supply of cheap juvenile labour' which had in her view 'practically destroyed the value of the Education Bill now before Parliament'.[87] Certainly by 1919 there were serious doubts about how far the whole scheme would progress. Selby-Bigge writing pessimistically 'we shall be lucky if we can fix a date in 1920-21, at any rate as far as the whole country is concerned' and considering that schools would be more likely to appear 'on a voluntary or semi-voluntary basis'.[88]

The political circumstances which first established and then so rapidly brought down this important experiment have been well analysed in recent studies.[89] Our concern is the London experiment, particularly in relation to girl students. The Lewis Committee Report in 1917 had called for 'a complete change of temper and outlook on the part of the people of

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86 GLRO EO/GEN/6/18 Report by the Chief Education Officer to the General Purposes sub-Committee of the Education Committee 22 January 1917.

87 M. MacArthur, 'Women Trade Unionists' Point of View' in Phillips (ed.), *op.cit.*

88 GLRO EO/FHE/1/109 Letter from L. A. Selby-Bigge to Spurley Hey, Director of Education for Manchester, 17 January 1919.

89 Thoms, D. W. and Do-herty, B., *ops. cit.* See n.5, *supra.*

this country as to what they mean, through the forces of industry and society to make of their boys and girls' adding 'Can the age of adolescence be brought out of the purview of economic exploitation and into that of social conscience?'.[90] Translated into the day continuation experiment, as it came into being in London in 1921-1922, it looked for a brief period as if these words might become something more than yet another of the pious mouthings with which post-elementary education proposals were so richly endowed.

Leaving aside organisational problems facing the London Authority such as buildings and equipment, there were a number of other difficulties closely connected with the new students and their teachers which feature in the Survey of the First Year's Work compiled by the Principals of the schools and presented to the LCC Education Committee by its Higher Education sub-Committee in February 1922.[91] One such problem was attendance. Preparatory work in 1919-1920 included a series of meetings held in different parts of London to explain the scheme to parents and employers before the first twenty-three schools opened in January 1921. The obligation to attend was placed on all boys and girls reaching the age of fourteen on or after 27 October 1920, unless they were already in full-time attendance at approved day schools or receiving other approved part-time instruction. By February 1921 figures showed that out of 11,962 notified, 11,494 had enrolled. By June the figures were 26,570 and 24,230 respectively and by September 48,557 and 38,794, by which time there were thirty-two council day continuation schools opened, and two non-provided.[92] Even allowing for wastage as between enrolment and attendance in class this was, at least for the first two sets of figures, a considerable achievement. In their Report the principals paid tribute to

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90 Final Report of the Departmental Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War Vol.1, Report [Cd.8512] 1917, 5.

91 London County Council Education Committee Minutes Report of the Higher Education sub-Committee, incorporating 'Survey of the First Year's Work : Extracts from Reports by Principals' (Hereafter referred to as Principals' Survey) 156-162.

92 Quoted in L. Brooks, The London Compulsory Day Continuation Schools, January 1921 to July 1922 Unpublished MA(Ed.) Thesis, University of London, June 1923.

the work of the school attendance officers and noted the gradual lessening of resistance from some parents.

> many parents are still truculent ... but the majority of these were so towards the elementary school and education altogether. Absence was more often the fault of the parent than of the employers ... One symptom of the gradually improving attitude of parents ... is the receiving of letters and postcards explaining absences ... and from another school.
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> The obstructive or passively resistant element was being gradually worn down by the activities of the school attendance officers. Employers were realising that the further education of their young employees, immediately they come into contact with the problem of fighting for a living, had a wonderfully steadying effect on these young people.[93]

With considerable unemployment in 1921 Principals had to tackle the allegation that boys or girls lost jobs because of school attendance. One Principal counter-attacked strongly.

> Every case reported to us where a student has been threatened or discharged on account of school attendance has been investigated. Out of some dozens of such cases only two *bona fide* cases were discovered ... Boys and girls are discharged for many reasons but school attendance is always given as the reason by the parents.

A number of employers soon modified their hostility, some asking why they had not been given proper information about the scheme. Some offered to come and speak to the students, while 'others have sent us letters of appreciation of individual students or applications for boys or girls to fill a vacancy'.[94]

Establishing good relations with a local Chamber of Commerce was found to be useful in reaching small employers who were the most obstructive, especially those with only one or two young workers. E. A. Waterfall in

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93 Principals' Survey IV 'Parents' paras.4&7, 161.

94 *Ibid.*, III 'Employment and Employers' para.20, 160.

her 1923 account of the schools relates a story ending sadly from such an area - Finsbury - in relation to boys

> the effect of the propaganda against the schools was most apparent. The boys and girls were for the most part employed in the Smithfield and other neighbouring markets. They had little regard for education at any time, yet they, especially the boys were being won over by the new individual methods, practical work and wider scope of subject matter. But the outcry had emboldened the coster parent and one-boy employer put an end to the experiment. A modified form of the Dalton plan was in use in certain classes ... The effect on the boys was described variously as "the blossoming of the boys", "he seemed to come out of a cloud", and "he burst out".[95]

Whatever the problems of the schools, quality and enthusiasm of the staffs was not among them. The new teachers came from a variety of sources. The majority were already teaching in elementary or secondary schools and included some from public schools and training colleges. Others came in from business or industry and many of these had evening institute teaching experience. 'Many came direct from Oxford or Cambridge and great care was taken to see missionary zeal tempered with qualifications.'[96]

Special courses were organised for these teachers, it being seen as particularly important that they should have a chance to meet, exchange experiences and discuss problems. The courses were not compulsory, though for some they were a condition of any future employment. When the Higher Education sub-Committee presented the Report in February 1922 it paid special tribute to staffs as well as to the heads of elementary schools, teachers in evening institutes and others directly or indirectly involved with the schools.

> The inspiration which has combined all these forces has its source in the realisation that in these schools there exists almost the last

95 E. A. Waterfall, The Day Continuation School in England, Its Function and Future (London 1923) 174-175.

96 Brooks, *op.cit.*, 57.

> opportunity for advancement for those boys and girls whose abilities were not manifest before they left the day school at fourteen years of age and also for those young people whose intellectual development had been delayed during their school career by illness or by poverty in the home.[97]

Syllabuses for the schools were orthodox in outline, with variations to suit local conditions and to some extent local employment patterns being made by Principals within guidelines laid down by the Council. It was up to the staff to devise fresh and interesting methods and approaches so that students were in no doubt that they had left the elementary school behind. Indeed determination that this should be the outcome was one argument for the part-time schools as against demands that the school leaving age should be raised to fifteen. At the all-girls Hammersmith school the Head made a point of addressing students as 'Miss So-and-so' and found this worked well in assuring the girls that they were now students and not schools pupils in the old style.[98] For girls, homemaking and not preparation for domestic service was emphasised in domestic subjects' classes, but shortage of accommodation and equipment meant that these subjects were very little developed during the schools' short life. Needlework was in several schools closely related to art and craft studies. At the Finsbury school The most successful work with the girls was the Art work : needlework results were too long in coming ... But in the Art room the girls found something which satisfied them. They drew and coloured simple designs more or less original, and were gradually passing on to the application of these to simple art needlework.' At Hammersmith 'Here quite beautiful craft- and needlework is being done, for the most part individually but with community weaving as well'.[99] Girls and boys at the City school had lively drama work, including plays by Shaw, Drinkwater, Sheridan, Galsworthy, Goldsmith and Shakespeare. Sheridan's plays were particularly popular in girls' schools 'in such different areas as Deptford, Bloomsbury and Shoreditch'.[100] At Hammersmith much emphasis was

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97 Report of the Higher Education sub-Committee 157.

98 Waterfall, *op.cit.*, 174.

99 *Ibid.*, 174-175.

placed on individual work and use of the library. The syllabus there, one of the few all-girls' schools, included certain common core subjects : English, Arithmetic, Drill and Music. Variable subjects available for some classes included History, Geography, and French for the more advanced students. Some classes took Science in conjunction with Homecraft, while others linked it to Arts and Crafts. All classes took either Art, Needlework or craft and often a combination of two or three.[101] Hammersmith had the advantage of a spacious building - a former convent. Others were less lucky, the Finsbury school being housed in an old condemned elementary school. Everywhere recreational activities had to be carried out discreetly as the schools were under constant attack for 'time-wasting'. Inter-school matches and other contests were an early casualty here.[102]

By the spring of 1922 a combination of factors working against the schools found expression in the March London County Council elections and the return of a majority pledged to strict economy. The decision to close the schools was taken in May and carried out in July.[103] The position of their defenders on the Council was weakened not only by the isolation of London, surrounded by Authorities which either had not implemented the act or only on a voluntary basis, but also by the opposition already referred to which saw the Schools as a dangerous diversion from the goal of proper secondary education for all. This opposition even went so far as to say that opponents of the Act 'acting from the worst intentions ... have saved us from the blunder of merely tacking a system of continuation

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100 Brooks, *op.cit.*, 85-86.

101 Waterfall, *op.cit.*, 183.

102 Brooks, *op.cit.*, 97.

103 For events leading up to closure see Doherty, *op.cit.*, 51-52. Voting on the Education Committee was very close, the opposition being led by the Rev. Stuart Headlam, the Rev. Scott Lidgett and Dr Sophia Jevons. Sir Robert Blair, Chief Education Officer, who had often clashed with Headlam, told the latter's biographer 'Happily we were able to join hearts and minds in the effort to establish the compulsory Day Continuation Schools ... and when after eighteen months' successful run they were closed by the fears of parents and the views of certain politicians, a common bond of heartbreak brought Headlam and myself into a closer understanding of each other's point of view'. F. G. Bettany, Stuart Headlam (London 1926) 164.

classes onto the present elementary schools, (and) given an opportunity for second thoughts'.[104]

At the time of closure close on 40,000 boys and girls were enrolled in 35 schools, with a total staff, full-time, part-time and principals, of 581.[105] The Council retained ten schools on a voluntary basis, two more being added later. These were organised on vocational lines, designed for the young wage-earner on a day release basis and in particular for the maintenance of some well-established courses like those for the Post Office boys. But once the principle of compulsion was removed, the numbers dropped to a fraction. An HMI Report on voluntary schools in 1926 spoke of a total of 6,000 students, many of them not in work nor seeking work. Courses for these students had grown 'but the number of employed students other than GPO messengers attending these classes is relatively small'. The Report makes only a few specific references to girls, noting for example that 'The provision for the teaching of science, manual instruction and domestic subjects other than needlework is, with certain exceptions, relatively poor, but the demand for these subjects is not great'. Only 211 girls were enrolled in London on homecraft courses many of them taking needlework for employment purposes rather than for home use. One positive comment in the report concerned trade instruction in dressmaking, needlework, millinery and upholstery courses.

> The provision of trade instruction induces parents to make an effort to let the girls remain longer at school and the success in this direction in Hackney where to forego wage-earning means a sacrifice, points to the appreciation and value of learning elementary trade methods.[106]

For these girls and for the small minority able, largely through scholarships, to attend London's full-time trade courses, post-elementary

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104 R. H. Tawney (ed.), Secondary Education for All : A policy for Labour (London 1922) 17.

105 Brooks, *op.cit.*, 62.

106 Report of His Majesty's Inspectors on the London Day Continuation Schools for the period ending 31 July 1926.

education had much to offer. Throughout years of debate on the subject, however, the assumption for girls that preparation for marriage was their primary objective had resulted in a blinkered and constricted vision of its usefulness. Even discussion on the importance of non-vocational studies such as history, literature and geography was often spoken of in relation to girls' future needs as mothers of families, while post-elementary education had been seen by numerous commentators as the ideal period for domestic and infant welfare studies. When directly vocational studies were in question, only rarely was mention made of the working girl's and woman's need for training as a long-term matter affecting her life beyond child-bearing years. Helen Jevons's comment in 1914 was exceptional. Mentioning the recent attention paid to the problem of sweated work and the establishment of trade boards, she wrote

> We have still to determine to what extent the haphazard entry of little girls of fourteen into a wage-earning life which consists in the monotonous repetition of one process in a factory while all educational restraint is removed, is at this very time producing the woman who must fall an easy prey to the sweater when she has later in life, untrained and uneducated, to earn her living the best way she can ... The correlation of the girl's entry into wage-earning life and her later employment as a married woman is generally hidden by the fact that for an interval of a few years as a young married woman she withdraws from the labour market and is lost sight of.[107]

Even before the war occasional reference had been made to the need for training for women who did not marry - a situation even more likely to arise in the post-war years.[108]

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107 H. W. Jevons, 'Industrial Prospects for Boys and Girls' Charity Organisation Review April 1914, 190-209.

108 See n.14 *supra*.

VII Conclusion

Assessment of the effects of influencing

In conclusion it is useful to return to the schools for a final examination of the attempts to condition girls for their future as women in the course of their short years of formal education. Home, school and other educational agencies, in particular the inspectorate, were involved though by no means always in harmony. As between home and school there was an important distinction. Elementary schoolgirls from working-class or lower-middle-class homes would be likely to find themselves involved in domestic duties from an early age as a matter of course, the extent varying according to degrees of poverty, place in the family and number and sex of siblings and in extreme cases the illness or death of the mother. They might well take it for granted that their mother's experience would, by and large, be their own. School might in some directions reinforce the prospect of a servicing and subordinate domestic role, but it must not be forgotten that under the London Education Authority the great majority of girls were in separate girls' departments under headmistresses, some of whom attempted to offer widened intellectual horizons. Some pupils might even encounter radical feminist teachers such as those who belonged to, or supported the views of the National Federation of Women Teachers (NFWT). This is a supposition of course, but such teachers certainly existed and might well on occasion in the early twentieth century have complicated the process of training girls in traditional feminine attitudes. Material quoted in previous chapters from the NFWT weekly column in The Schoolmistress gives evidence of concern at the pressures on their girl pupils, while The London Teacher in 1913 concluded an editorial on the domestic drudgery of girls with the words

> But behind the drudgery of the child slave, behind the monotonous labour of the factory girl and the domestic servant, lies the galling

fact that in so many minds this economic subserviency of the girl and the woman is regarded as a part of the natural order of things. We are glad to know that education and the work of the teachers especially is changing this unnatural belief. We do not believe in propaganda within the schools, but we hope that our teaching will be such as to develop character, self-respect and self-reliance among the women of the next generation. Women themselves are breaking the bonds of social servitude, and from women also must come the force to improve their economic conditions. A great responsibility rests upon the teaching profession, and particularly upon women teachers in the uplifting of womanhood.[1]

The use of the schools as a channel for instruction in domestic studies and infant care - the most explicit forms of conditioning for girls - was closely related to the vigorous and often unsympathetic scrutiny directed towards working-class mothers.[2] There were, however, widely differing attitudes towards mothers' problems, and hence variations of view as to what their daughters should be taught. Those in authority who considered that admonition, advice and education, together with some degree of voluntary support, were appropriate answers to mothers' difficulties saw good sense in the provision of domestic training for daughters. Others however sought for different solutions, and a number of organisations and individuals in the early years of the century expressed and acted on the belief that the poverty of mothers within the family and their legal powerlessness lay at the root of many of their difficulties. Those holding such views might be involved in research such as that undertaken by the Fabian Women's Group in Lambeth between 1909 and 1913;[3] in publicity as found in Anna Martin's trenchant articles between 1910 and 1919;[4] or in pressure for government action in support of mothers such as the campaign led by the Women's Co-operative Guild for payment of the thirty-shilling Maternity Grant direct to the mother, the Guild's proposals

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1 'Little Woman', The London Teacher 10 October 1913, 811.

2 See Chapter III ii *supra*, and C. Chinn, They Worked all their Lives 1880-1939 (Manchester 1988).

3 M. Pember-Reeves, Round about a Pound a Week (London 1913, republished 1979) sums up the findings of this investigation.

4 A. Martin's articles are listed in Chapter I i *supra*, n.78.

for a national maternity service,[5] and the promotion, under Eleanor Rathbone's leadership, of plans for Family Endowment.[6] Such campaigners while not opposed to some domestic studies for girls were likely to see them as merely marginal to the needs of mothers.

It was however the firm advocates of domestic training in school who were in a position to direct and finance these studies, and the manner in which cookery, laundry and housework were promoted - indeed heralded is not too strong a word - reflected the admonitory attitude towards mothers, seeing them as victims of their own ignorance and ineptitude, needing the salutary influence of properly trained daughters, who in their turn would avoid their mothers' mistakes. Attention has already been drawn to the tendency at conferences of domestic subjects' teachers to extol such instruction in almost mystical terms, a fashion from which Board of Education documents were not always exempt as in this comment on teacher training

> She (the teacher) is doing something more than fitting herself to instruct children in cookery, washing, cleaning and all the odds and ends of housekeeping and ... is really preparing to educate her pupils not merely in housecrafts but in homecraft ... Service in the home is too often relegated to the region of sheer drudgery; it requires imagination to invest it with the honour which is properly its due.[7]

There can be no proof as to whether pompous phrasemongering of this kind had any effect beyond a conference speech or an annual report, and whether it would filter down through the crowded syllabus of a teacher-training course to lessons in a domestic subjects' centre. In London the apparent absence of any reports from women inspectors of work done in the centres leaves only speculation as to how far the straightforward

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5 The Guild's national scheme for maternity and infancy care is given in an appendix to M. Llewelyn Davies (ed.), Maternity : Letters from Working Women (London 1915; republished 1978) 209-212.

6 Family Endowment Committee, Equal Pay and the Family : A proposal for the National Endowment of Motherhood (London 1918); and see E. Rathbone, The Disinherited Family (London 1924).

7 Board of Education, Annual Report 1915-1916 [Cd.8594] 1917-18 'Training of Teachers of Domestic Subjects', 68.

imparting of facts and techniques absorbed teachers' time and energy without recourse to such moralising. Many elementary schoolgirls were too well acquainted with the drudgery of domestic work for attempts to invest it with a gloss of honour and dignity to have serious effect. There were attempts to apply the same kind of adulation to domestic service even though domestic studies in school were not officially intended to be a preparation for it. In 1916, for example, in her Presidential address to the Association of Teachers of Domestic Subjects, Mrs Louise Creighton[8] stressed the important duty of a housekeeper "to ennoble and dignify" the work of the domestic servants in her charge

> and to make them feel that in the life and achievements of a statesman, an ecclesiastic, an artist or a musician they too play an important part. When a statesman chances to make a bad speech and lose his temper in the House of Commons ... it may well be the fault of his dinner the night before.[9]

Leaving aside such dubious eulogising, what conclusions is it possible to draw as to the effect on girls of domestic teaching in school ? Did it make them more efficient wives and mothers when, a few years later, the majority left paid work for marriage and maternity ? Did instruction before the age of 14 as to the manner in which cookery, laundry and housework should properly be carried on make them better able to deal later with the problem of cleaning slum or near slum dwellings, of shopping economically or of producing nutritious meals for a family on a tight budget ? The argument often heard against school tuition because of the long gap between school and marriage had some weight but not a great deal. Few girls, even when out at work, would be totally free from domestic chores and the sense of how to set about organising home and kitchen might to some extent be recalled, at least by those whose school

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8 Louise Creighton 1850-1936. Wife of Mandell Creighton, Bishop of London (d.1901). Much involved with the National Union of Women Workers and a considerable public figure in social work.

9 Education, Vol.27, 9 June 1916. Mrs Creighton addressed the Conference on 'The Housekeeper as Citizen'.

training had been reasonably realistic and not too far removed from the level of their later housekeeping. Dr Turnbull, in a recent article investigating domestic subject syllabuses, has however drawn attention to the gulf between the intention and the achievements of those who promoted a curriculum specifically directed to girls to ensure that every fourteen year-old left school as 'a skilled and resourceful housewife'. In her view the syllabuses were frequently so badly planned that they could have had little useful impact on the home. She sees the total domestic ideology implanted by the teaching as far more important.[10]

There are two separate matters to consider here : the practical business of teaching certain domestic skills, and the conscious indoctrination of girls in those habits of service and subordination which marriage and maternity would be likely to require of them. Had there been close and sympathetic contact between the centres, the schools (where needlework was carried on) and the mothers, the practical teaching might have been more effective, and such co-operation was clearly the ideal at which an enthusiast like Helen Silletoe was aiming.[11] In London however the evidence, sparse though it is, points to a considerable degree of strain and of unsatisfactory, even hostile relations between the three, amid which the influence of home, its outlook and methods, was likely to emerge as the strongest factor. Indoctrination was another matter. Homes supplied their own lessons through the attitudes of mothers, relations with the men and boys of the family,[12] obligations to siblings, and neighbourhood conventions on proper behaviour for daughters. By contrast, as suggested above, the schools' part in training girls in a subordinate and restricted view of their future was by no means a straightforward process, nor one in which by the early twentieth century all women teachers would consciously have acquiesced. The school's influence needs to be considered

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10 A. Turnbull, 'Learning her Womanly Work : The Elementary School Curriculum 1870-1914' in F. Hunt (ed.), Lessons for Life : The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950 (Oxford 1987) 83-100.

11 See Chapter III i *supra*, n.36.

12 See M. C. Matheson, 'Relation of School and Home' in C. Hecht (ed.), Rearing an Imperial Race (London 1913) quoted Chapter III i *supra*, 99, n.43.

in relation to the general run of school subjects, apart from cookery, laundry and housework to see how such objectives could be achieved or whether indeed they were considered appropriate.

Of domestic subjects taught in school rather than in the centres, two, needlework and infant care, had the most obvious potential for female training. The implications of needlework for girls, apart from the peculiar circumstances of the war, have been dealt with above and are considered in some detail in Dr Turnbull's article. As for school training in infant care this may well have had considerable influence on girls in those schools such as Montem Street under Mrs Truelove where the subject was covered with great seriousness and consistency.[13] Earlier discussion has however established that the incidence of infant care teaching was scattered and fragmentary and the practical difficulties of carrying it out in schools along the lines prescribed in the Memorandum of 1910, found to be very great. Alice Ravenhill had some time earlier warned that 'disappointment must follow any attempt to diminish the infant mortality of this country by endeavouring to train in the care of infants children themselves little more than babies. The place of an elementary school is not to teach in detail duties which cannot be fulfilled for many years'.[14] As previously noted the emphasis in infant care education was shifting between the years of the two Memoranda of 1910 and 1925 from the infant mortality issue to the function of conditioning girls for maternity - hence the extension of the teaching plans to secondary schools in the latter year. This change of emphasis is reflected in the nature of the prize-winning school essay for National Baby Week in 1917. It came from a child of ten years old, at least two years younger than the officially approved age for the teaching of infant care and was a docile little piece in which the child described helping an obviously capable and experienced mother, ending 'Mother then sat down and held the baby close to her breast. Mother told me that this

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13 See Chapter III ii *supra*, n.121.

14 A. Ravenhill quoted in C. Webb, 'The Need for Compulsory Continuation Schools. A Plea of behalf of Girls' University Review Vol.3, June 1906, 263-268. For some publications by Ravenhill see Chapter IV i *supra*, n.9.

was called "being breast fed".'.[15] It is a possible assumption that the judges were seeking evidence of acceptable attitudes from Baby Week activities in school, rather than giving precedence to essays showing girls coping with young babies against heavy odds. The link between girls' good behaviour and their care of young children was a commonplace as a Times Educational Supplement correspondent pointed out in 1925 remarking that 'a "difficult" girl of any age from the age of infancy upwards often needs nothing for her salvation but some real work and responsibility and the company of children younger than herself'.[16]

Turning from school subjects specific to girls to those common to both sexes, the limited nature of science teaching for both girls and boys in London elementary schools was made clear in the report of 1919.[17] Hygiene was frequently the only type of science taught to older girls and was supposed to provide the basis for infant care classes later. In some schools 'science' became an adjunct to handwork or to domestic studies to the extent that it could hardly qualify as a separate area of work.[18] As for arithmetic, that important and prestigious school subject, there are a number of indications that the scales were weighted in favour of boys. Girls' needlework often interfered with the time available for it as compared with boys, and for older girls in certain schools 'household arithmetic' was taken. A. W. Dakers, President of the NUT contributing an article on vocational training to the suffragist journal Common Cause in 1914, denounced the practice as an unwarranted limitation on the education of girls. '"Household arithmetic" is the utmost limit to which they need to go in the study of mathematics ... The cost of scrubbing brushes, floor cloths and dusters or the problem of how to support a family on the munificent incomes which the "captains of industry" permit the "lower

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15 Report on Children's essays submitted for Baby Week The Child Vol.8, December 1917, 163-165.

16 Times Educational Supplement 'Faults of Girls' Education' 21 March 1925, 113.

17 GLRO EO/PS/2/21. R. S. Clay and C. A. Keane, 'The Teaching of Science in Elementary Schools of the London County Council' Elementary Education sub-Committee Report July 1919.

18 Chapter III i *supra*, 102-107 and The London Teacher 14 June 1918.

classes" to enjoy ... are the subjects to which [they] must devote the last years of their school life.'[19] An altogether more perceptive view of girls' performance in relation to arithmetic came later in the same year from Irene Poulter of the NFWT. In the Federation's weekly column in The Schoolmistress she drew attention to a suggestion made to Sir Robert Blair and to the LCC Educational Adviser Dr William Garnett. It came from the 'official organ' of an unspecified teachers' association and proposed that a number of men teachers specially qualified in arithmetic be employed to give instruction in a few selected girls' departments. This suggestion followed a comment in the Chief Examiner's report of February 1913 on the London Junior County Scholarship examination that the 'usual superiority' of boys in arithmetic must be attributed 'partly to sex and partly to differences in teaching'. Poulter took up the issue sharply.

> This report and the suggestion that seems to have arisen from it cast an adverse reflection on us as women and as teachers. But if we examine the present condition of social and educational affairs we shall find that the supposed inferiority of girls may be accounted for by arbitrary and unnatural sex barriers and disabilities rather than inherent sex weaknesses.
>
> Let us go back to the beginning of the child's school life when it is labelled "infant" and not "boy" or "girl". The teaching received at this stage is alike for all infants and we must not forget that the foundation of both the boys' superiority and the girls' inferiority is laid by women teachers. The first idea of abstract number is built up by the infant teacher. But even at this period sex distinctions are brought into being and sex barriers are raised. Boys play at leapfrog involving number and measuring of distances; but this game is forbidden to girls by convention and clothing. Boys play with marbles and add, subtract and put into practice elementary mechanics; but girls may not sit on the pavements and soil their garments. Later on boys play cricket; this means more training in number and in measuring distance and further acquaintance with mass, force and velocity. The girls are told to play with dolls or mind the baby.

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19 A. W. Dakers, 'Vocational Training', The Common Cause of Humanity 3 April 1914, 13.

Poulter went on to contrast toys given to boys and girls by better-off parents which enhanced the differences, and to reiterate the fact that just as scholarship age approached, girls were becoming increasingly useful at home.[20]

Insistence from a variety of sources that girls at elementary school should be ensured as good a general education as possible in their short school life was often mentioned in relation to literature, history and geography, subjects in which they might be expected to perform as well as boys. Catherine Webb, former secretary of the Women's Industrial Council, in her article of 1906 in the University Review had pleaded for day continuation classes for girls because of the pressure they were under between the drive for training in domesticity and their increasing importance to their parents as wage earners. The girl had become, in Webb's view, 'as important a wage asset to her parents as the boy'.[21] Her plea for girls' education was reinforced by various commentators in the years that followed, in terms quoted in earlier chapters from Mrs E. D. Marvin, Professor Alexander Darroch, and later, Professor Winifred Cullis and others whose sympathies or direct knowledge made them conscious of the shortcomings of girls' educational experience.[22] While not denying the use of some domestic training for girls in school, all promoted the view, with varying degrees of intensity, that girls must not be denied their full share of intellectual stimulus and width of study. Of particular importance is the fact emphasised above, that this opinion was shared by some elementary school headmistresses in London and elsewhere.[23] A brief but cogent expression of the opposing view that girls' elementary education should be narrowed came from the authoritative voice of Sir Robert Morant in his introduction to the Memorandum of 1910 on the teaching of infant care.[24]

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20 The Schoolmistress 17 September 1914, 462.

21 Webb, *op.cit.*, n.14.

22 For Marvin and Darroch's views see Chapter III i *supra*, 85-87. Professor Cullis's Foreword to H. Silletoe's A History of the Teaching of Domestic Subjects (London 1933) is quoted in part in Chapter I i *supra*, 12.

23 See Chapter III i *supra*, 94.

24 Quoted Chapter III ii *supra*, 118.

It has been possible to use the scattered references from inspectors' reports and teacher comments in the London log books to see in which ways attempts were made to promote a good general education. 'Some of the older girls' wrote an inspector 'learn to work profitably by themselves and acquire the rudiments of good taste in their unassisted choice of literature'.[25] In the same year, 1915, it was remarked of another school in the same division 'very careful training in oral composition is given and results in an unusual facility of expression'. In this school an inspector later remarked on the good effects of frequent educational visits and of geography teaching to widen the children's horizons as, though living in West London, some children 'had never seen a river, not even the Thames; nor seen a hill, not even Notting Hill'.[26] This applied, he added, to girls in some neighbouring schools as well. Dramatic methods were used to encourage interest in history and geography for girls coming from an area of Hoxton where homes gave little encouragement for school work.[27] Outings were organised for older girls to Shakespeare plays, museums, art galleries, flower shows, Kew gardens and elsewhere and several schools encouraged individual reading and practice in speaking, reading aloud and reciting. Such records as exist of encouragement in general education for older girls in London should be seen together with Dr Kimmins's judgement of the 'quite remarkable increase in the maturity of ideas' he found in the responses of thirteen year-old girls taking part in 1915 in his survey of attitudes towards the war.[28]

Whatever the scale of effectiveness of efforts made to encourage girls intellectually, remarks from inspectors and heads on their deportment and behaviour were still charged with predictable overtones commending neatness, modesty, courtesy and restraint. Here also however, comments from the Kimmins surveys on the war and on attitudes to air raids should be considered. He drew attention to strong and admirable attributes of

25 Flora Gardens school GLRO EO/DIV1/FLO/LB/1.
26 The Victoria school GLRO EO/DIV1/VIC/LB/5.
27 Haggerston Road school GLRO EO/DIV4/HAG/LB/3.
28 Quoted in Chapter V *supra*, 192.

character among the girls, giving evidence of their mature behaviour and good sense in dealing, for example, with crises at home during raids. These were qualities some heads were to remark on during the raids of 1917-1918. In a later survey Kimmins contrasted favourably the attitudes of girls with those of boys in relation to work for wounded servicemen and to co-operation in school under wartime difficulties.[29] He commented also on the compassion shown in some girls' scholarship essays on the war. These positive characteristics have little to do with the conventional image of the well-behaved girl with downcast eyes at her sewing or producing a composition more remarkable for its neatness than for its originality. Indeed an important part of the conditioning process for girls, whether or not objectively recognized as such, was the downgrading and softening of their strengths of character into sweetly servicing domestic qualities. It is significant that the word 'emasculate' could be used for this process implying the removal of power and force by depriving them of masculine qualities, thus rendering these strong characteristics 'feminine' and *ipso facto* weakened.[30] In 1916 verses in the D. C. Thomson penny magazine Girls' Weekly encapsulated this process under the heading 'A Word of Counsel Girls'.

> The girls that get married are home girls
> Girls that are mother's right hand
> That fathers and brothers can trust in
> And the little ones understand.
>
> The girls that get married are wise girls
> Who know what to do and to say
> That drive with a smile or a soft word
> The wrath of the household away.[31]

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29 Quoted in Chapter V *supra*, 193. This survey was based on Junior County Scholarship papers.

30 Emasculate : Defined in Chambers Concise 20th Century Dictionary as 'to deprive of masculine vigour; to render effeminate; to lessen or take away the power and effectiveness of.' See also the comment from L. Davidoff and C. Hall, '...a particular problem stems from the tendency for gender terms to be used as stand-ins for socially valued or derogated attributes as when strength or independence are conceived of as "manly" and weakness as "effeminacy"' Family Fortunes (London 1987) 33.

31 Girls' Weekly 11 March 1916, 172.

In such a manner were genuine virtues such as helpfulness, wisdom, kindliness sentimentalized into feminine pliancy and acceptance of subordination as a precondition for marriage.

Once out at work however, different conditions prevailed. Apart from living-in domestic service with its strict limitations on behaviour and round-the-clock control, standards of conduct commended at school were not likely to be of much use in the harsh circumstances of wage earning as encountered by many fourteen year-olds, particularly in work affected by wartime pressures. Not surprisingly Edith Sellers, self-appointed moralist, whose strictures on working-class young people and their parents have been mentioned previously, raised in her article 'Boy and Girl War Products' the spectre of a certain 'juvenile Bolshevism' found most regrettably among girls who had just left school for work or who had only worked in wartime. In her experience they were resentful of any control, offhand, rude and totally selfish in attitude. Domestic servants behaved better because 'girls who cherish revolutionary all-round-equality notions do not become servants now' and were far more likely to go into shops, offices or factories. She raised the question of how far mothers were to blame for driving young girls into wage earning and considered that strict control would be needed to stamp out 'Bolshevism' among young people.[32] School training on behaviour proper for girls appeared to weigh little against the chance for the rapid changing of jobs and higher earning prospects opened by the war. The strong positive qualities that developed among girls in factory work, noted by Emily Mathias, held no appeal for Sellers nor for others who deplored the loss of 'feminine' qualities in wartime occupations.[33]

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32 E. Sellers, 'Boy and Girl War Products' The Nineteenth Century and After Vol.84, October 1918, 702-716. Her articles in wartime are listed in Chapter I i *supra*, 26, n.76.

33 E. Mathias, 'The Young Factory Girl' in J. J. Findley (ed.), The Young Wage-earner and the Problem of his Education (London 1918) 77-100. For the loss of 'feminine' qualities see J. Shelley in the same volume, 'From Home to Industrial Life with special reference to the Adolescent Girl' 22-32. Both are discussed in Chapter I i *supra*, 20-21. Further reference to the courage and resilience of working girls can be found in B. Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (London 1915; republished 1978) quoting reports from women factory inspectors, 282-283. On the coercion of women back into domestic service after the war see G. Braybon and P. Summerfield, Out of the Cage (London 1987) 119-129.

The NFWT in 1916 drew attention to another and more insidious form of conditioning, negative but none the less serious. This lay in the absence for many girls of any perspective outside and beyond the domestic and familial spheres, once the break of a few years at work was overtaken by marriage. An NFWT article spoke of the large number of women whose horizon was limited by 'things as they always have been and so seem to them inevitable' and referred to the life of the young married woman 'bounded by the four walls of her home' whose existence often became one 'of ceaseless, soulless drudgery'. The writer found it appalling that for many women 'the only intellectual and broadening influence that ever touches their lives comes during the few school years and via teachers', many living for 60 to 70 years 'on the mental and moral stimulus given in school before 14'. As all the girls concerned had been through elementary school and would carry on the impressions it had made 'our success depends in a great measure on the largeness of our own outlook and upon the atmosphere of sympathy and of unfailing interest in the life of the world around that we can create within the walls of our classrooms'.[34] Something of the same problem in relation to forms of work the mother might go into after child-rearing years, had been recognised by Helen Jevons of the Charity Organisation Society in her article quoted earlier, pointing out that any relation between the girl's entry into wage-earning life and her later employment was hidden by her years of withdrawal from the labour market as a young mother, leaving her in later life 'an easy prey to the sweater'.[35] Catherine Webb, to return to her perceptive article of 1906, had not seen the elementary school in so positive a light as the NFWT article suggested.

> That the stirrings of a new ambition towards a more equal share in the wider outlook of her brothers is moving working women today to demand an enlarged opportunity for civic responsibility in the franchise, is due, I think, not at all to the influence of her elementary school training but to the lessons which have come to her through a

34 The Schoolmistress 16 March 1916, 482.

35 H. Jevons, 'Industrial Prospects for Boys and Girls' Charity Organisation Review April 1914, 190-209. Quoted *supra*, Chapter VI ii, 247.

hard-fought battle with life.[36]

Twenty-one years later Webb was to be the historian of the Women's Co-operative Guild, the organisation which since the early 1880s had provided, for a number of married women heavily involved in domestic and family cares, a chance for activity, stimulus through discussion and working friendships with other women outside the home. There was, of course, a wide gulf between young girls just leaving school or in their early years at work and the experienced serious-minded guildswomen, but with the NFWT referring to school and teachers as the only broadening influence in many women's lives, some reference to the Guild is essential. It was based on the organised power of women as consumers, hence the title of Webb's history,[37] through their local Co-operative store, a base from which issues were tackled such as conditions of work and service in the Co-op., school clinic provision and maternity services in the locality. Some women went on from this to be involved in national campaigns such as divorce law reform, national maternity provision, wages for women and others. In her foreword to Webb's history Margaret Llewelyn Davies, General Secretary to the Guild from 1889 to 1921, wrote

> It might well have been thought a hopeless task for a class of women who "never know when their day's work's done" and on whom personal claims are insistent, ceaseless and irresistable, to organise and educate themselves and undertake public work and responsibilities ... Within the Co-operative movement the women have gradually built up their own organisation, and, in doing so they have not only faced the prejudices which confront all pioneers, but overcame their inexperience of working democratically together.[38]

The democratic structure of the Guild gave a number of its members experience of committee work, of organising and of public speaking. While some middle-class women were prominent in national campaigns, local guilds were uniquely free from the patronage of 'ladies'. 'I was not used to

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36 C. Webb, *op.cit.*, n.14 *supra*.

37 C. Webb, The Woman with the Basket. The History of the Women's Co-operative Guild (Manchester 1927).

38 *Ibid.*, 12.

working women managing their own meetings' wrote one Guild member, recollecting her rage at Mothers' Meetings where ladies came and lectured 'on the domestic affairs of workers' homes that it was impossible for them to understand' and of being obliged to listen without a chance to question. Eventually she left such meetings and joined the Guild.[39] The Guild was limited geographically and also socially since it mainly affected the lives of artisans' wives or at any rate wives of those in steady employment.[40] Membership however, opened up perspectives of work and interest outside the home for those not only carrying the normal burdens of family life, but also bearing the weight of insistence that the young married woman - the elementary school leaver of a decade or so before - should submerge her whole existence in marriage and maternity. As the Times Educational Supplement put it in 1923

> Her (the mother's) work ... will never stop, but the greater part of it is too intimately bound up with life to be characterised as a duty or a vocation and is seldom consciously considered as "work" by herself or others ... holidays are not feasible; and the situation would be intolerable if the family were in the mother's view something external, and not, what it really is, an extension of her personality.[41]

Ten years before, in the Guild's publication Maternity, a guildswoman's letter gave a different view. Aged 48, mother of five in a household where the weekly wage had ranged from 17 to 25 shillings, she wrote

> I think if it had not been for the Women's Guild I should have been in the asylum ... I was the first member made after the (local) committee was formed. I was secretary for over four years. Home duties were the cause of my resigning but I never miss a meeting. I have missed only four times since I joined. I would not miss my Guild for anything but illness.[42]

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39 Mrs Layton, 'Memories of Seventy Years' in M. Llewelyn Davies (ed.), Life as We have known It (London 1931; republished 1977) 40.

40 Nevertheless, study of M. Llewelyn Davies's evidence to the Royal Commission on Divorce [Cd.6480] Qs. 36, 961-37,086, 1912, indicates the width of contacts available to local Guild branches.

41 'Boys and Girls' Times Educational Supplement 27 January 1923. Article commenting on the Report on the Differentiation of the Curriculum between the Sexes in Secondary Schools.

42 M. Llewelyn Davies (ed.), Maternity : Letters from Working Women (London 1915, republished 1978) Letter 160, 190.

The Guild was strong in parts of London and its influence as a democratic organisation drawing on the skills and strengths of working-class women should be a subject of further research, involving also the possible influence of local branches on the schools.

A first conclusion to be drawn from the evidence examined in this thesis is the emergence of the view that the schools, however seriously they attempted to mould and influence girls, came but a poor second to the home. It was there that mothers, in particular, provided the powerful imperatives for attitudes and conduct. Girls, immersed in domestic cares from an early age, had to realise daily the constraints on their behaviour in relation to brothers and other boys and the adaptation to male needs and male tempers. While both they and their brothers were likely to work, many of them long and hard, before and after school, their work would yield less variety and frequently no pay.[43] For good or ill this was conditioning as it had to be from which there was likely to be neither escape nor appeal. It was not conditioning imposed by some external standard-makers, though certainly some lessons from school, such as the need for circumspect moral behaviour would often complement rather than conflict with home examples. School-imposed standards of punctuality, regular attendance, cleanliness of clothes, hair and body were of a different category, having behind them the sanctions and penalties available to teachers, school attendance officers and nurses. The ineffectiveness of school and local authorities' attempts to direct and control school leavers and their choice of jobs in spite of the elaborate mechanisms set up, at least in London, reflects once again, this time in relation to both boys and girls, the strength of home and neighbourhood as against the school. The position of the school as intermediary, with heads and other teachers anxious to promote good relations with the home, and at the same time

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43 A useful indication of the variety and payment for such work near to the LCC area can be found in the Board of Education Memorandum of the Results of an Inquiry made by Inspectors of the Board of Education in an Urban District in the Suburbs of London into (a) The Working of the System of Labour Certificates and (b) the Employment of Children who are in attendance at Public Elementary Schools, 1918.

acting as agents for the authorities, has been considered above.[44] Schools bore the brunt of the tensions provoked by the growing demands of the health and education authorities who could act, as Maud Pember-Reeves put it in 1913 'in a manner so baffling, so harassing, so contradictory that the only feeling it induces in the minds of parents whose lives are passed in incessant toil and incessant want are exasperation, fear and resentment'.[45]

A second conclusion arising from the thesis concerns the relative importance of four contrasting approaches to girls' elementary education. Of these, which are considered below, the fourth was only present in the early twentieth century in fragmentary and embryonic form, but offers nevertheless certain significant links with present-day work on the achievement of genuine equality of opportunity between girls and boys at school.

The first of these approaches dismissed the need for more than the most basic instruction for girls, considering education for them after the age of eleven or twelve as a waste of time and of much less importance than home training, apart from the small minority proceeding to some form of secondary or trade school. Such a view was already an anachronism, certainly in London and other major urban authorities, before the First World War. The proposal that girls should be part-timers able to leave school early for domestic duties was strongly attacked when it was raised in questions to witnesses before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1904.[46] The second and far more pervasive body of opinion, discussed in Chapter III of this thesis held that the education of girls was certainly of importance but should be positively directed towards their future domestic and maternal duties. This represented a powerful strand in thinking and propaganda on girls' education at all levels, reaching

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44 See Chapter II *supra*.

45 M. Pember-Reeves, *op.cit.*, 224.

46 Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration [Cd.2210] Vol.II, 'Witnesses and Evidence', 1904. Evidence of Dr A. Eichholz, Qs. 718-729 and Mrs A. Lyttelton, Qs. 5537-5550.

its apotheosis in Newsom's Education of Girls in 1948.[47]

A third approach was one that might be described as almost entirely negative. Some writers and commentators on aspects of elementary education dealt with girls' concerns by the simple process of ignoring them almost completely, adopting the view, whether consciously or not, that comment and description in terms of boys covered adequately the affairs and experience of girls. Michael Sadler spoke less than the truth when he remarked, when considering post-school education for girls, that 'male administrators are a little apt to overlook them'.[48] Three documents to which attention has already been drawn - the Board of Education pamphlet on the teaching of history in elementary schools, B. Dumville's article on the curriculum and the Master of Balliol's discourse on training for citizenship exemplify this technique. In all of them apart from the occasional brief paragraph or passing mention, half the school population might not exist.[49]

Some books on the elementary school exhibit the same tendency.
A. W. Newton, a retired inspector, published his survey of English elementary schools in 1919. It is a humane and sympathetic book with interesting anecdotal material from his own experiences but, apart from some fleeting references to needlework and domestic studies, virtually all his examples and comments concern boys. Thus compulsory attendance 'no longer ends with the boy's birthday'; a section on punishments is entirely concerned with boys, as are sections on the teaching of history and geography ('What knowledge of these subjects should a boy of 13 or 14 bring away from school?', '...by the time a boy leaves school he should be able to read any ordinary map with ease and accuracy'). Even more surprising, moral education is dealt with in terms of boys, Newton's brief and somewhat embarrassed concern with the teaching of sex hygiene being disposed of by a reference to the Boy Scout's Handbook. The needs of girls

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47 J. Newsom, Education of Girls (London 1948).
48 M. Sadler (ed.), Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere (Manchester 1907) 748.
49 See respectively Chapter V i n.28, I ii n.126 and V ii n.77.

in the teaching of ordinary hygiene are likewise ignored.[50]
C. Birchenough's standard history of elementary education, though the scope of his book involves more reference to girls' syllabuses, shows the same tendency in general statements. Thus speaking of conflicting ideals of education as between the imposition of a body of knowledge and the development of personality he says of the former 'It has in view a standard man and sets out to manufacture him'.[51] Attention has already been drawn to the absence of virtually any reference to girls' educational experience in Selleck's major survey of early twentieth century new thinking and practice in the elementary schools.[52] It is a comparatively recent achievement of the modern women's movement to have challenged this tradition, drawing attention to the disadvantage to girls and women in education and other fields of the submerging of their experience under the ubiquitous use of the male pronoun and the male example.

It remains, in concluding this thesis, to recognise and assemble those indications, partial and embryonic though they are, of a fourth and more positive approach to the education of girls at elementary school in the early twentieth century, in which they were seen not as ineducable drudges, not simply as future wives and mothers, not as adjuncts to an educational process designed for boys, but as pupils in their own right, with qualities, interests and needs sometimes coinciding with those of boys, at other times quite distinct, but in no way inferior or of less account.

A comparison between two references to biblical education provides a starting point. A. W. Newton remarked that teachers were likely to revolt at the custom of using the complete Bible as a class book. 'Our ordinary schoolbooks are expurgated to the last degree, yet school managers put in the children's way, if not actually in the school syllabus, certain most unpleasant stories set out in the crudest possible language'.[53] Seventeen

50 A. W. Newton, The English Elementary School (London 1919).
51 C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education in England and Wales from 1800 to the Present Day (London 1938) 178.
52 R. J. W. Selleck, The New Education 1870-1914 (London and Melbourne 1968).
53 Newton, *op.cit.*, 180.

years before, F. H. Hayward, while thoroughly castigating the futility and confusion of scripture syllabuses, took the matter further remarking on the utter unsuitability of many Old Testament stories for girls.

> Only in *Ruth* do women receive a respectful or semi-respectful treatment. But even that is not specially suitable for girls except the first chapter. Most of the Bible has the atmosphere of the harem. It contains absolutely no story which could occupy the same relation to the education of girls as those of Joseph and David to that of boys. Unfortunately Cinderella - the girl-Joseph despised by her sisters but ultimately outdistancing them - is not a biblical character. One is bound to infer that school managers have never dreamt of the existence of a problem at this precise point.[54]

Any attempt to put the case for a separate type of study for girls could involve the view that, being for girls, it would be inferior and of less importance. Dr Hayward, whether consciously or not, was making the point that difference here did not imply inferiority and that to provide biblical material that was relevant and meaningful to girls was in no way to belittle it. Irene Poulter, in her analysis quoted above of boys' greater facility in arithmetic was attacking the same problem from a different standpoint - that girls were at a disadvantage in their work not because of innate inferiority, but because of social conditioning.[55] There are very few direct comparisons to be found in these years bearing on boy and girl experience in different school subjects. One other occurs in 1909 when a woman witness to a Consultative Committee pointed out that mixed classes could work to girls' disadvantage as the needs of the girls were usually subordinated to those of boys, 'For instance drawing was taught on lines suited to mechanics and never in a manner suitable for girls, and Hygiene also as taught in mixed schools was quite useless to girls'.[56]

An interesting reversal of attitudes implying disadvantage for boys was to be found in relation to domestic studies - that supposed heartland of

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54 F. H. Hayward, The Reform of Moral and Biblical Education (London 1902) 197-198.

55 Poulter, *op.cit.*

56 Board of Education, Report of the Consultative Committee on Attendance, voluntary or otherwise, at Continuation Schools. [Cd.4758] 1909. Evidence of Women Witnesses, 583-596.

girls' education. A medical contributor to The Child in 1911 pointed out that the confining of domestic training to girls only encouraged boys and men to look on domestic work as unmanly and effeminate. This leads them to despise the work in the home and to forget the continuous exertion and self-denial that a mother has to exert in raising children ... there is no reason why the average working-man should not render more assistance in the home if he were properly trained at school.' Other contributors to this form of debate have been dealt with in some detail above.[57] The implication was that for their proper moral and educational advance and to modify ingrained and often harmful masculine attitudes, boys should share in learning to understand the needs of the home.

Dr Kimmins's studies, referred to in previous chapters as illustrating current attitudes of London boys and girls between 8 and 13 years old are in themselves important in this context, in that they consider girls in their own right, freed from the eugenic-inspired distortion of so much material relating to them. The scale of his main survey[58] on attitudes to the war was impressive, involving 1511 boys and 1570 girls from ten senior departments. There is no indication that Kimmins in his position as chief inspector considered the views of the girls as of less importance or value than those of the boys. Both were recorded on their merits.

The belief, expressed by a number of head teachers,[59] that girls should have equality with boys in the achievement of a good general education can be added to these examples. They together indicate some degree of awareness that girls could suffer in their education, often in ways not immediately obvious, and that careful analysis and action might be needed to redress this state of affairs. There are interesting and important

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57 A. Warner, 'The Problem of the Neglected Child' The Child Vol.1, July 1911, 873. The whole issue of boys and domestic studies is discussed in Chapter III i *supra*, 107-109.

58 See Chapter V ii *supra*, 190-193.

59 See for example, Chapter III i *supra*, 94, n.31.

comparisons to be made with studies of gender bias undertaken in the 1970s and still in progress.[60] Some of the forms taken by this bias, such as inadequate attention to the needs of girls in mixed classes, or pressure on girls of domestic duties at home, directly reflect criticisms from the earlier period.

An attempt has been made in the foregoing chapters to indicate some of the complex pressures on girls during years of mounting demographic concern, of militant feminism, of widespread anger and alarm over acute social problems and, as a climax, of the impact of the war. A number of questions present themselves for further study. These include the relationship between radical women teachers and their girl pupils in the inter-war years and how far, if indeed at all, the tentative approaches to sex education visible during and after the war survived or were extended, with particular regard to the teacher training colleges. The history of the women's movement between the wars has long been a relatively neglected area of study, but this is now giving way to serious investigation.[61] The situation of girls in the elementary education sector is an essential part of any such research.

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60 Examples of books on this subject are given in Chapter I i n.28 *supra*. See also the bibliography given in Sexism in Schools published by the Association of Educational Psychologists, 1988.

61 For example, B. Harrison, Prudent Revolutionaries, Portraits of British Feminists between the Wars (Oxford 1987), and three books forthcoming in 1989 : J. Alberti, Beyond Suffrage (London, Macmillan); H. L. Smith (ed.), British Feminism in the Twentieth Century Part 2: Feminism in the Inter-War Years (Gloucester, Edward Elgar); and D. Beddoe, Back to Home and Duty : Women in Britain between the Wars (London, Pandora).

APPENDIX 1.

ANNA MARTIN

An obituary notice to Anna Martin appeared in the Times of 6 December 1937.

Miss Anna Martin died on December 1st after a long life of public service. Dr Scott Lidgett writes of her :-

> She was born in Ireland and was a member of a remarkable family. Her sister married Professor James Ward the philosopher and psychologist and her brother collaborated with Professor T. H. Huxley in his literary work. Anna Martin was one of the earliest women to take her degree at the London University. She held an important educational post in Cape Town, but returned to England nearly forty years ago, and took up residence as a worker in the Bermondsey Settlement. She founded the Guild of Women Citizens into which she brought many of the poorest women of the riverside. She sought both to interest and instruct them in all the most important social and political problems of the time, securing the assistance of many of the leaders of the Women's Movement. Her remarkable personality was magnetic in its attractiveness; her sympathy with the hard struggle of the waterside population and her wide studies combined to enable her to carry out a unique work of social education. She was a powerful influence in the women's franchise movement. Her articles in the Nineteenth Century and the Hibbert Journal exercised great influence upon those who were interested in understanding the industrial and economic conditions of the illpaid and casual labourers of the waterside, particularly in the bearing upon the women and children of their homes. She carried on this work with growing influence in Bermondsey and beyond until her health failed. To the end she kept in touch with those who sought to continue her work, and to the last was a source of guidance and encouragement to them.

The Rev. John Scott Lidgett (1854-1953), writer of the above, served on the London School Board for the Southwark division from 1897 and as both Councillor and Alderman on the London County Council. He was co-founder of the Bermondsey Settlement in 1891 and Warden from 1891 to 1949.

Among Anna Martin's friends in the Women's Movement was the former militant suffragette Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, to whom she wrote in 1931 :-

> My great consolation is to realize the almost incredible improvement that has come about in the status and general life conditions of married working women. When I came to Rotherhithe in 1899 I used to come in from a round of visits feeling that there were no subjects under the flag - black, yellow, or brown, who were so utterly neglected; that they were forsaken by God and Man. The wives were nothing but serfs and most social reforms took the form of giving the screw another turn. Now the women can and do stand up for themselves and the difference is enormous.

Quoted by E. Pethick-Lawrence in her autobiography My Part in a Changing World (London, Gollancz 1938) 346.

APPENDIX 2.

TRADES FOR LONDON GIRLS (See Chapter VI ii *supra*)

The handbook of Trades for London Girls and how to enter Them published by the Apprenticeship and Skilled Employment Association (with a companion volume for boys) provided an extensive annotated list of trades likely, with a few exceptions, to be entered by girls leaving elementary school. Emphasis was laid at the outset on the need for those seeking work to obtain advice from the Association's local committees, eighteen of which existed in 1914 in different parts of London, working closely with the Junior Advisory Committee network. Girls were advised to give special attention to future working conditions and to prospects for advancement and training. On the former they should consider : lack of any chance to move about while at work; cold, damp or overheated conditions; poor lighting; a polluted atmosphere; contact with dangerous chemicals, metallic dust etc. On prospects girls were urged to seek proper agreements in advance as to the training offered; to avoid where possible work alternating between slack and overpressed periods; and to make use of evening classes for further tuition. Those considering living-in domestic service were advised against newspaper advertisements, and urged to consult the MABYS, the GFS, or the YWCA.

The Clothing Trades, a wide classification, included : infant and children's outfitting; millinery; ladies' and gentlemen's tailoring, and waistcoat making; making of dresses, skirts, corsets, belts, braces, caps, collars, ties, scarves; waterproof clothing. The large wholesale factories, such as for example the army clothing factory in Pimlico, employed a number of girls who if 'strong and hard-working' could become machinists, though the work was described as stressful, monotonous and with little hope of advancement.

A miscellany of other trades included : cigar and cigarette making; box making; jewellery and silver polishing; cutting, sorting and branding of corks; packing, filling, labelling, corking and capping in some chemical works; brush making; wholesale confectionery where work varied from 'speedy but monotonous' wrapping and packing in some parts of the trade, to more skilled work in chocolate making.

Certain trades carried specific warnings. Thus artificial flower making entailed very long hours, though otherwise was suitable for delicate and crippled girls; the feather trades were highly seasonal, and unsuitable for girls with weak chests; the same applied to trades involving fur, of which fur-pulling - the preparation of skins for the furrier - was the most unhealthy and unpleasant. Florist work involved cold and wet conditions not suitable for the delicate. French polishing and umbrella and sunshade making, though skilled, both tended to attract 'a rough type of girl'.

Laundry work, found mainly in outlying parts of London was increasingly being done by machines. Girls were advised to apply for work in establishments for the more delicate class of work done by hand. Ironing offered quite good prospects and sometimes apprenticeships, though was for 'strong girls only'. Dyeing and cleaning were described as 'a very fair opening for girls', 'a tidy respectable class of girl' being required.

Shop assistant work offered wide variation. Girls entered between fourteen and sixteen, but there was little chance of apprenticeship except in some large stores. Living-in for girls in retail establishments was mentioned as so unpopular that 'it would probably die out in the course of the next few years'.

Clerking work for young girls was mentioned as something of a 'craze' among school leavers expecting short hours, good pay, comfortable surroundings and social advancement. The strongest warning was given that only girls with really satisfactory attainments, reaching Standard VII in their elementary schools should apply, with teacher ready to testify to their powers of concentration, intelligence and methodical habits.

Abbreviations used in the text

ATDS	Association of Teachers of Domestic Subjects
COS	Charity Organisation Society
GLRO	Greater London Record Office
HMI	His Majesty's Inspector
LCC	London County Council
NCCVD	National Council for the Combatting of Venereal Disease
NFWT	National Federation of Women Teachers
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
NUT	National Union of Teachers
PRO	Public Record Office

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(Note - Those listed below are major articles. A number of contributions and short articles from professional journals constantly referred to, such as National Health, The Child, Education, The Schoolmistress and others, are not listed separately, though they are given full references in footnotes throughout the text. The same applies to separate chapters in symposia.)

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ED/21	11211	Lavender Hill School, Battersea
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	11423	Hugh Myddleton School, Finsbury
	11427	Winchester Street School, Finsbury
	11476	Halstow Road School, Greenwich
	11597	Saffron Hill School, Holborn
	11676	Middle Row School, Kensal New Town, Kensington
	11787	Baring Road School, Lewisham
	12031	Faraday Street School, Southwark
	12043	John Ruskin School, Southwark
	12147	Wordsworth Road School, Stoke Newington

See also ED/11/51 (1909-1911) and ED/11/150 (1923) on Infant Care and Management.

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- Log Books for Individual Girls' Departments
  Listed under Divisions (see map p.23). General Classification as, for example :
  Flora Gardens School Division 1. EO/DIV1/FLO/LB/1.
  Teesdale Street School Division 5. EO/DIV5/TEE/LB/3.
  The last number indicates the particular record (e.g. infants, girls, boys, pre-1913, post-1913) from those available for that school.

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